

ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES



1919



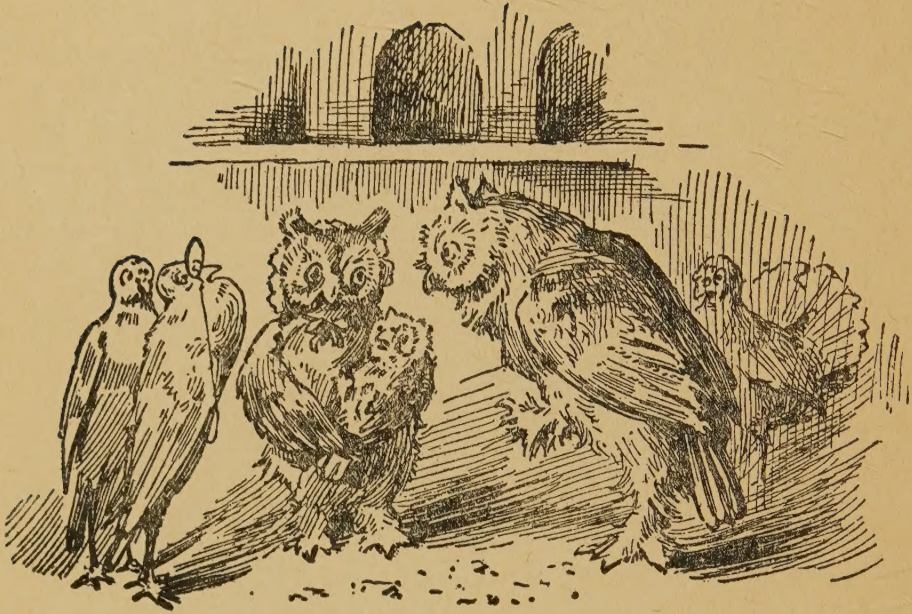


ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

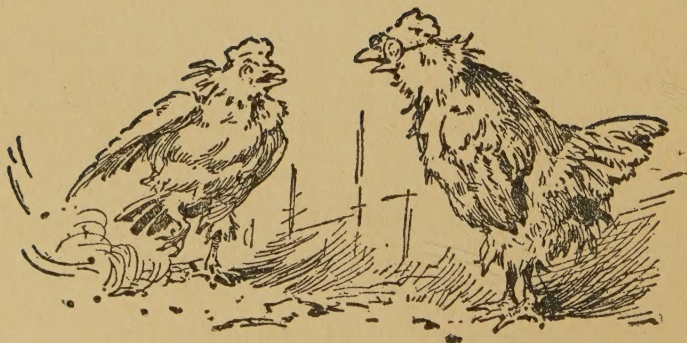
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE WILD SWANS	I
THE SWINEHERD	28
THE WICKED PRINCE	36
THE UGLY DUCKLING	41
THE FIR TREE	55
THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER	68
THE STORKS	75
THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES	82
THE FARMYARD COCK AND THE WEATHER-COCK	90
THE TINDER-BOX	94
"IT IS QUITE TRUE"	106
THE SNOW QUEEN	
<i>First Story:</i> Which Treats of the Mirror and its Fragments.	110
<i>Second Story:</i> A Little Boy and a Little Girl	112
<i>Third Story:</i> The Flower-Garden of the Woman who Knew Conjuring	120
<i>Fourth Story:</i> The Prince and the Princess	131

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE SNOW QUEEN—Continued	
<i>Fifth Story:</i> The Little Robber-Girl	140
<i>Sixth Story:</i> The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman	146
<i>Seventh Story:</i> What Happened in the Snow Queen's Palace, and Afterwards	151
“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”	157
THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL	165
LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS	169
THE SNOW MAN	187
THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA	196
THE DAISY	198
THE FLYING TRUNK	205



The Wild Swans

FAR away, in the land to which the swallows fly in the winter, there lived a King, who had eleven sons, and one daughter, Elsa. The eleven brothers—they were royal princes—went to school, each with a star on his breast, and a sword by his side; they wrote on golden slates with diamond pencils; and they could learn by heart as well as they could read; one could see at a glance that they were princes. Their sister Elsa sat on a little stool made of plate-glass, and had a picture-book that cost as much as half a kingdom.



Yes, these children were indeed fortunate; but their happiness was not to last for ever.

Their father, who was King over the whole of the country, married a wicked Queen, who did not love the poor children. This they discovered on the very first day. There was a grand festival at the palace, and the children were playing at receiving company; but although they usually had all kinds of pastry and roasted apples, the Queen gave them only sand in a tea-cup, and told them to suppose that it was something nice.

The next week she sent little Elsa away to live with a peasant and his wife; and it was not long before she told the King so many untrue things about the princes that he no longer cared anything about them.

“Go out into the world and look after yourselves,”

THE WILD SWANS

said the wicked Queen. "Fly away like great birds that have no voice."

But she could not make them as ugly as she would have liked; so they were transformed into eleven beautiful white swans. With a strange cry, they flew out of the windows of the palace, far away over the park and the forest.

It was still early in the morning when they passed the place where their sister Elsa was sleeping in a peasant's cottage. They hovered over the roof, craned their long necks, and flapped their wings, but nobody heard or saw them; so they had again to fly high up in the sky, and far away out into the wide world. They flew onwards to a great dark forest, that stretched down to the seashore.

Poor Elsa stood in the peasant's cottage, and played with a green leaf, for she had no toys. She made a hole in the leaf, and looked through it at the sun. It seemed to her as if she saw her brothers' bright eyes; and every time the sunbeams shone on her cheeks she thought of all the kisses they had given her.

One day passed away just like another. As the wind rustled through the rose-bushes outside the house, it whispered to the roses: "Who could be more beautiful than you?" But the roses shook their heads, and said, "Elsa." When the old woman was sitting on a Sunday in the doorway reading her hymn-book, the wind would turn the leaves and say to the book: "Who can be more pious than you?" and the hymn-book would answer, "Elsa."

And what the roses and the hymn-book said was really true.

When she was fifteen years old, Elsa returned home.

THE WILD SWANS

The Queen saw how beautiful her little step-daughter had become, and her heart was filled with envy and hatred. She would have liked to turn her into a wild swan, like her brothers; but she did not dare to do that, just then, because the King wished to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the Queen went into her bathroom, which was built of marble, and prettily furnished with soft cushions and the most beautiful carpets. Then she took three toads, kissed them, and said to one of them—

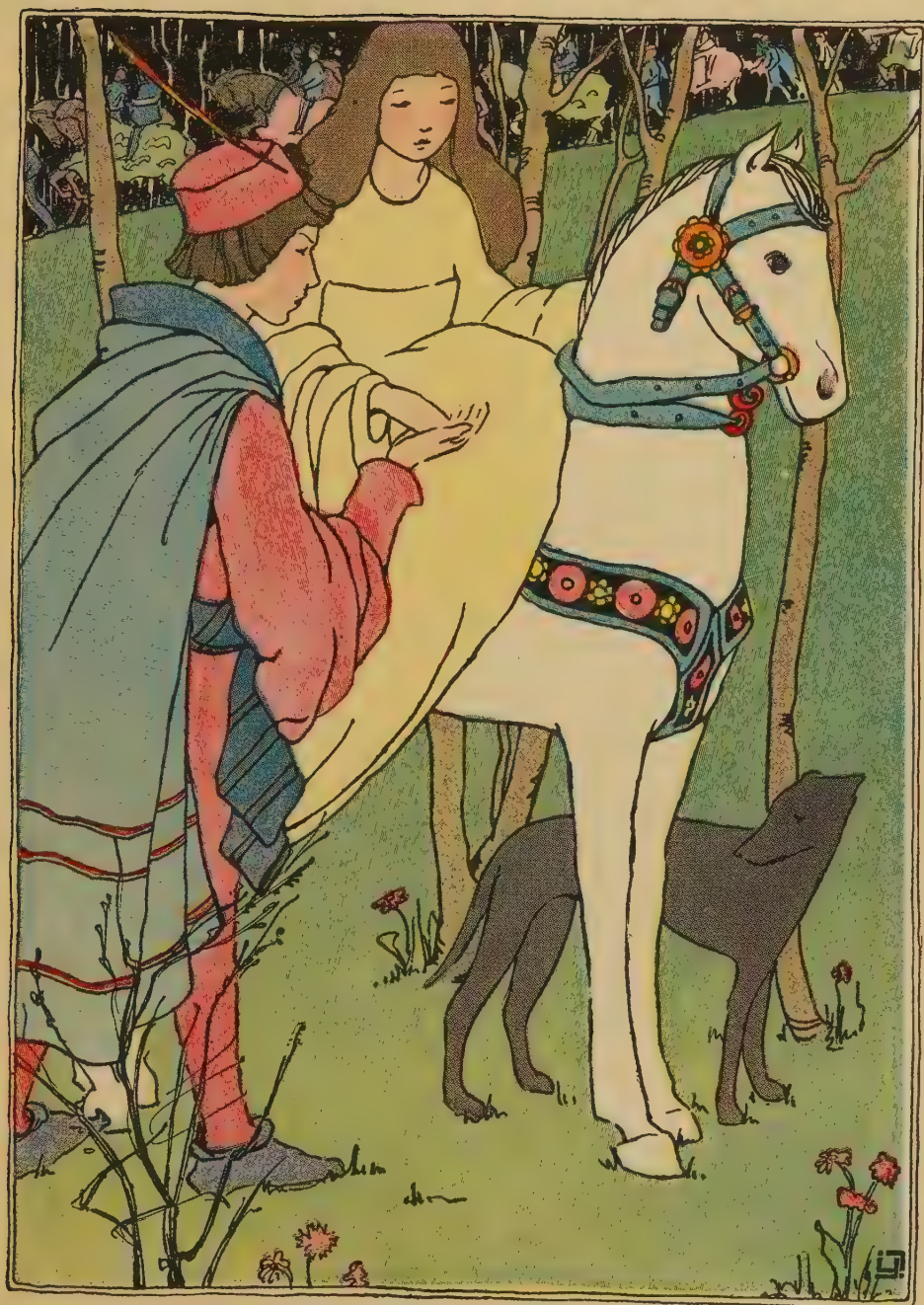
“When Elsa comes to the bath, seat yourself upon her head that she may become as stupid as you.”

And to the second she said: “Seat yourself on her forehead, so that she may be as ugly as you, and her father may not know her.”

To the third she whispered: “Lie on her heart, and give her an evil temper, that may bring misfortune upon her.”

So she placed the toads in the clear water, which at once turned green, summoned Elsa, undressed her, and bade her enter the bath. As she dipped her head under the water, one of the toads seated itself on her head, another on her forehead, and the third on her bosom; but Elsa did not seem to notice them; and as soon as she rose out of the water, three red poppies were floating on the surface. If the toads had not been venomous, and kissed by the witch Queen, they would have been changed into red roses; but they became flowers all the same, for they had rested on her head and on her heart, and she was too pious and innocent to be hurt by the power of witchcraft.

The wicked Queen, seeing this, washed the poor girl with walnut-juice, until she was quite brown, smeared



THE WILD SWANS

some evil-smelling ointment over her pretty face, and tangled her beautiful hair until it was impossible to recognize the pretty Elsa. When her father saw her he was quite shocked, and declared she could not be his daughter. None but the watch-dogs knew her, and



they were only poor creatures, who could say nothing.

Poor little Elsa wept and thought of her eleven brothers who were all far away. Full of sorrow, she stole away from the palace, and wandered the whole day long over the fields and moors till she came to the great forest. She did not know whither she was going,

THE WILD SWANS

but she felt very unhappy, and longed so much for her brothers, who, like herself, had been driven out into the world, that she felt she must try to find them.

She had not been long in the forest when the night fell, and she lost the path. So she lay down on the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. It was very still, the air was mild, and all around, in the grass, and on the moss, hundreds of glow-worms were shining like green fires. When she touched a branch with her hand, the brilliant insects fell down upon her like a shower of shooting-stars.

The whole night long she dreamed of her brothers; they were playing again as children, writing with diamond pencils on their golden slates, and looking at the beautiful picture-book that had cost half a kingdom. But on the slate they did not scribble as before, for they wrote now of the brave deeds they had done, and of all that they had lived to see. And in the picture-book everything was living. The birds sang, and the people walked out of the book, and spoke to Elsa and her brothers; but when she turned the leaf, they ran back again, each to his own place, so that they might remain in their proper order.

When she awoke, the sun was high in the heavens, although she could not see it, owing to the dense foliage of the lofty trees; but the sunbeams played through the leaves like a glittering golden veil. The air was sweetly scented by the green foliage, and the birds almost perched themselves on Elsa's shoulders.

She heard the ripple of water flowing from many springs into a pool with the most beautiful sandy bed. It was surrounded by thick bushes, except in one place,

THE WILD SWANS

where the deer had made a large opening. And here Elsa went down to the water, which was so clear that



if the wind had not touched the branches and the bushes, so as to make them move, she might have

THE WILD SWANS

thought that they were painted on the bed of the pool, so distinctly were all the leaves reflected, both those through which the sun was shining, and those that lay entirely in the shadow.

When, however, she saw the reflection of her own face, she was quite frightened: it was so brown and ugly. But she wetted her little hand, and rubbed her eyes and forehead, and the white skin again shone through.

Now she took off her clothes and stepped into the fresh water; and a more beautiful little princess than she could not be found in all the world.

When she had dressed herself and plaited her long hair, she went to the rippling spring, drank out of the hollow of her hand, and went deeper into the wood, without knowing whither she was going. She thought of her brothers, and of the good God, who surely would not abandon her. He it was Who made the wild apple-tree, to give food to the hungry; He Who led her to such a tree, its branches hanging heavy with fruit.

Here she had her midday meal; she put props under the branches, and then continued her journey, right into the darkest part of the wood. It was so still that she could hear the sound of her own footsteps, the rustle of every little withered leaf as it was crushed under her feet. Not a bird was to be seen; not a sunbeam could pierce its way through the thick foliage; the lofty trees stood close together, and as she looked around her it seemed as if a trellis-work of branches enclosed her on every side. This was a solitude such as she had never felt before.

The night grew very dark; not a single little glow-worm sparkled from the moss. Sadly she laid herself

THE WILD SWANS

down to sleep, and it seemed to her that the branches above were parted, and that the Christ Jesus with His mild eyes was looking down upon her, while little angels peeped through over His head and under His arms.

When she awoke in the morning she did not know whether she had dreamed this, or whether it had really happened. She had only walked a few steps on her way, when she met an old woman with a basket full of berries, and she gave Elsa a few of these to eat. Elsa asked her whether she had seen eleven princes riding through the forest.

"No," replied the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans, with golden crowns on their heads, swimming down the stream close by," and she led Elsa a little farther away to a slope at the bottom of which a rivulet was flowing. The trees on the banks stretched their long leafy branches across the stream; and where they had grown up some distance apart, they had gradually torn the roots from the ground, until they could bend over the water, and twine their branches together.

Elsa bade the old woman farewell, and followed the banks until she came to the place where the stream flowed out into the open sea. A glorious expanse of sea lay spread before the maiden's eyes, but not a sail appeared, not a boat was to be seen; how was she to go farther?

She noticed how all the countless pebbles on the beach were rounded by the action of the water: glass, iron, stone, everything that lay scattered there had been shaped by the water, which was far softer than even her delicate hands.

"The water rolls on without tiring, making smooth what is rough; and so will I: I too will be unwearied

THE WILD SWANS

in my task. I thank you for your lesson, you clear rolling waves; my heart tells me that you will one day carry me to my dear brothers."

On the seaweed that was thrown up by the waves lay eleven white swans' feathers; these she gathered into a bunch. Drops of water were sprinkled over them, but whether they were dew-drops or tears, no one could tell.

Elsa did not feel so lonely by the shore, for there were constant changes in the sea, more in the course of a few hours than a lake would show during a whole year. When a heavy black cloud appeared, the sea seemed to say: "I can look black and heavy too;" and the wind blew, and the waves were flecked with white foam. But when the reflection of the sun gave a red tint to the sky, and the wind had gone to rest, the sea looked like the leaf of a rose. Now it became green, now white, but although it was so still and quiet, there was always a gentle movement on the beach—the water rose and fell as softly as the breast of a sleeping child.

At sunset Elsa saw eleven white swans, with golden crowns on their heads, flying towards the land. They flew one behind the other, looking like a long white ribbon in the sky. Elsa crept up to the slope and hid behind a bush; and the swans alighted quite close to her, flapping their great white wings. Then the sun sank into the water, and in a moment the plumage of the swans had fallen off and eleven handsome princes—Elsa's brothers—stood before her!

She uttered a loud cry, for, although they were much changed, she knew them—she felt that it must be they. So she ran into their arms, calling them by name; and they were all very happy when they saw and recognized their little sister, who was now a tall, beautiful girl.

THE WILD SWANS

They laughed and cried; and soon they understood how wicked their stepmother had been to them all.

"We fly about," said the eldest of the brothers, "in the shape of wild swans as long as the sun is in the sky; but as soon as it sets we recover our human form. We are bound, however, to find a resting-place before sunset, for at that moment if we were flying high up in the sky, we should fall as human beings down into the depths of the sea. We do not live here; a land just as beautiful as this lies beyond the sea; but the distance across is very great, and there is not a single island on the way where we can rest for the night. Only a lonely little rock rises above the water. It is so small that we have just room to lie there side by side, and when the sea runs high the waves dash over us; yet we thank God for it. There we pass the night in our human form, and without this resting-place, we should never again be able to visit our beloved native land, for it takes us two of the longest days in the year to fly across. But once a year we are permitted to return to our home, where we may stay just eleven days; then we fly over the great forest, from which we can see the castle where we were born, and where our father lives, and see, too, the tall spire of the church where our mother lies buried. Here even the trees and bushes seem familiar to us; the wild horses gallop over the plains just as we saw them in our childhood; the wood-cutter sings the same old songs to which we danced as children. This is our native land, to this we feel drawn, and here we have found you, dear little sister. We may stay here two more days, and then we must fly back to a land, as beautiful perhaps, but not our own. How

THE WILD SWANS

can we take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat!"

"How shall I be able to save you?" asked their sister; they slept very little, but talked together nearly the whole of the night.

Elsa was awakened by the sound of the swans' wings as they soared above her; the brothers were again transformed, and flew in wide circles until at last they were far away. But one, the youngest of all, stayed behind, and laid his swan's head in her lap, while she stroked his white wings. The whole day they remained together. Towards evening the others came back, and when the sun set they stood in their natural shape.

"To-morrow we must fly away, and may not return for a whole year, but we cannot leave you here alone. Have you courage to come with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you through the forest; why should not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea?"

"Yes; take me with you!" said Elsa.

They spent the night in making a couch with the bark of the pliant willow and with tough reeds. It was large and strong; Elsa lay down upon it, and when the sun rose, and the brothers were transformed into wild swans, they took hold of the couch with their beaks, and flew high up into the sky with their dear little sister, who was still asleep. As the sunbeams shone on her face, one of the swans flew over her head to shade her with his broad wings.

They were far from the coast, and when Elsa awoke she thought she was still dreaming. It seemed to her so wonderful to be carried through the air, high up over the sea. By her side lay a branch with delicious

THE WILD SWANS

ripe berries and a bunch of sweet roots. The youngest of the brothers had gathered them for her, and now she thanked him with a smile, for she knew it was he who



was flying over her head and shading her with his wings.

They were so high up that the first ship they saw be-

THE WILD SWANS

neath them looked like a white gull floating on the water. A great cloud rising behind them appeared like a lofty mountain, and upon it Elsa saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans, looking gigantic in size as they flew past. It was a scene of more grandeur than anything she had ever beheld; but as the sun rose higher, and the cloud was left behind, the floating shadows disappeared.

Onward they flew, the whole day long, like an arrow whizzing through the air, but slower perhaps than usual, for now they had their sister to carry.

Stormy weather came on as the evening drew near; full of despair, Elsa saw the sun sink, and the lonely little rock in the sea was not yet in sight. It seemed to her that the swans moved their wings more and more rapidly. Ah! it was owing to her that they did not advance more quickly; and when the sun set they would become human, fall into the sea, and be drowned! She prayed to God from the depths of her heart; but the rock was nowhere to be seen.

The black clouds came nearer, and the freshening breeze announced a storm. The clouds shot forward in a leaden, threatening mass, and the lightning burst forth, flash after flash. Now the sun was nearly on the horizon, and Elsa's heart was trembling. Suddenly the swans darted forward so swiftly that she thought she would fall, but still they sailed onward. The sun was half way down in the water when at last she saw the little rock beneath her, but it seemed no larger than a seal with its head above the surface.

So swiftly did the sun sink that before her feet touched the ground it seemed scarcely larger than a

THE WILD SWANS

star, and then it was suddenly extinguished, like the last spark on a piece of burnt paper.

The brothers were standing round her, arm-in-arm, but there was no room to spare—just enough for them all. The waves dashed against the rocks and covered them with spray. The sky was lit up as by one continuous flash of lightning; one peal of thunder followed the other in quick succession; but sister and brothers held each other by the hand, and sang hymns, which gave them faith and courage.

At dawn the air was pure and calm, and as soon as the sun rose the swans flew away with Elsa from the rock. The sea was still rough, and it looked to them from their great height as if the white foam on the dark green ocean were millions of swans floating over the waves.

As the sun rose higher, Elsa saw before her, floating in the air, a range of mountains, their tops covered with shining masses of ice. In the middle of these was a palace a mile long, with rows of magnificent pillars one above the other. Down below, the lofty crowns of the palm-trees waved above gorgeous flowers as large as mill-wheels. She asked whether this was the country to which they were flying; but the swans shook their heads, for what she saw was the beautiful, ever-changing, aerial palace of Fata Morgana, and into this palace no human being might enter. Elsa was gazing at the sea, when, suddenly, mountains, forests, and palaces vanished; and now there stood twenty stately churches, all like one another, with tall steeples and pointed windows. She seemed to hear the organ playing; but it was only the murmur of the sea. As the churches drew nearer, they were transformed into a

THE WILD SWANS

fleet sailing beneath her. She looked down, and the fleet was merely the sea mist drifting over the water.

It was an ever-changing scene that was spread before her eyes; until at last she saw the country to which they were bound—beautiful blue mountains covered with cedar forests, villages, and palaces. Long before the sun went down she was sitting on a cliff before a huge cavern overgrown with trailing green creepers, like embroidered tapestry.

“Now we shall see what you will dream of to-night,” said the youngest of the brothers, as he showed her the beautiful apartment in which she was to sleep.

“If only I could dream how to save you!” she said, and this thought was so constantly in her mind, and so fervent was her prayer to God for help, that even in her slumber she continued to pray.

It seemed to her that she flew high up in the air to Fata Morgana’s aerial palace, and that the fairy came to meet her, beautiful and radiant, but nevertheless very much like the old woman who had given her the berries in the forest, and told her about the swans with the golden crowns.

“Your brothers can be saved,” she said; “but have you courage and perseverance? Though the sea is softer than your delicate hands, it can mold the hardest rocks; but it feels no pain as your fingers do; it has no heart, and cannot suffer such anguish and agony as you will have to endure. Do you see this stinging-nettle that I hold in my hand? Many nettles of this kind may be found around the cave in which you sleep; these only, and the kind that grow upon churchyard graves, are of any use—remember that! These you must gather, although they will burn your hands with blis-

THE WILD SWANS

ters. Crush them with your feet: they will become a kind of flax, and from this you must spin and knit eleven shirts with long sleeves; throw these over the eleven wild swans, and the spell will be broken.

“But remember that from the moment you undertake this task, until it is finished, even if it should take a whole year, you must not speak. The first word that you utter will go like a deadly dagger through your



brothers' hearts: upon your tongue hang their lives. Remember all this!"

Elsa touched the stinging-nettle with her hand. It burnt like fire, and she awoke.

It was broad daylight, and close by her, where she had been sleeping, lay a stinging-nettle, like the one she had seen in her dream. She then fell on her knees

THE WILD SWANS

and thanked the Lord, and went out through the entrance of the cave, to begin her work. With her delicate hands she plucked the dreadful nettles, although they stung like fire. They burned great blisters on her hands and arms, but she gladly suffered this to save her dear brothers.

Each nettle she crushed with her bare feet, and began to spin the green fibers.

When the sun set, the brothers arrived, and were sorely frightened to find her quite dumb. They thought it was a new spell cast upon her by the wicked step-mother, but when they saw her hands, they understood what she was doing for their sake. The youngest brother wept, and where his tears fell she felt no pain, and the burning blisters vanished.

The whole night through she continued her work, for she could not rest until she had saved her dear brothers. During the whole of the following day, while the swans were away, she sat in solitude, but never had the hours gone so quickly. One shirt was already finished; now she began the next.

Then she heard the sound of huntsmen's horns among the mountains.

She trembled with fear; the sound came nearer, and she heard the barking of the hounds. Then she fled in terror into the cave, gathered together the nettles which she had plucked, and sat down upon the bundle.

Suddenly a great hound came bounding from a thicket, and soon afterwards another, and yet another. They barked loudly, ran back, and came again.

Before many minutes all the huntsmen stood outside the cave; the handsomest amongst them was the King



THE WILD SWANS

of the country. He advanced towards Elsa; never before had he seen a more beautiful maiden.

"How did you come here, my pretty child?" said he.

Elsa shook her head, for she dared not speak—it would cost her brothers their lives; and she hid her hands under her apron, so that the King should not see how greatly she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he: "you must not stay here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will clothe you in silk and velvet, place a golden crown on your head, and you shall live in my most magnificent palace!" and he lifted her upon his horse.

She wept and wrung her hands, but the King said:

"My only wish is to make you happy; one day you will thank me for this."

And he rode away among the mountains, holding her in front of him on his horse, while the huntsmen followed.

At sunset, they saw in front of them a magnificent city with churches and cupolas, and the King led Elsa into his palace, where great fountains were playing in the lofty marble halls, and where the walls and ceilings were covered with rich paintings. But she had eyes for none of this grandeur; she could only weep and mourn. Passively she allowed the women to array her in costly robes, plait her hair with precious pearls, and cover her blistered fingers with dainty gloves.

As she stood there in all her splendor, she was so dazzlingly beautiful that the whole Court bowed before her, and the King declared that he would make her his bride. But the Archbishop shook his head, and whispered that the beautiful maiden from the wood

THE WILD SWANS

was surely a witch, who had blinded their eyes and ensnared the King's heart.

The King would not listen to this. He ordered music to be played, and the most costly dishes to be served: beautiful girls danced before Elsa, and she was led through the center of the gardens into magnificent halls: but not a smile played over her lips, or gleamed in her eyes; sorrow stood there as an eternal heritage.

The King now opened a little chamber close by, where she was to sleep. It was hung with costly green tapestry and closely resembled the cave in which she had lived. On the floor lay the bundle of fiber which she had prepared from the nettles, and on the wall hung the shirt which was already finished. One of the huntsmen had thought these things very curious and brought them with him

"Here you may dream that you are back in your former home," said the King. "Here is the work with which you occupied yourself; now in the midst of all your splendor, it may please you to think of that time."

When Elsa saw these things that lay so near her heart, a smile played upon her lips, and the blood rushed to her cheeks; she thought of her brothers' deliverance, and kissed the King's hand. He pressed her to his heart, and commanded that all the church bells should announce the wedding festival. The beautiful dumb maiden of the wood was to be the Queen of the land!

Then the Archbishop whispered bitter words in the King's ear, but they did not sink into his heart. The wedding was to take place, and the Archbishop himself had to place the crown on Elsa's head. In his wicked spite he pressed the narrow circlet so firmly upon her

THE WILD SWANS

forehead that it hurt her: but a heavier weight lay upon her heart—her sorrow for her brothers.

She could not feel any bodily pain, her mouth was dumb, for a single word would cost her brothers their lives; but in her eyes one could read how deep was her love for the kind, handsome King who had done everything to make her happy.

Day by day she grew to love him more: oh! how she longed to confide in him and tell him her grief; but no: she must remain dumb—in silence she must fulfill her task.

At night, therefore, she crept away from him and went into the little chamber that had been arranged like the cave, and here she wove one shirt after another.

But when she began on the seventh, she had no more flax left. She knew that the nettles which she could use were growing in the churchyard, but she had to gather them herself, and how was she to get there?

“Alas, what is the pain in my fingers when compared with the anguish of my heart?” she thought. “I must make the attempt; surely Heaven will not deny me help.”

With a trembling heart, as if she were about to commit an evil act, she stole down, one moonlight night, into the garden, and passed through the long avenues and lonely streets to the churchyard.

Here, sitting around one of the largest tombstones, she saw a group of ugly creatures, hideous witches, who took off their rags as if they were going to bathe, and, digging with their long skinny fingers into a freshly-made grave, pulled out the corpses and devoured their flesh.

Elsa had to pass close by them, and they fixed their

THE WILD SWANS

wicked eyes upon her; but she murmured a prayer, gathered the stinging-nettles, and carried them back to the palace.

One person only had seen her, the Archbishop, for he watched while others slept.

Now he felt sure that he was right in his distrust of the Queen: she was a witch, and had therefore enchanted the King, together with the whole of the people.

In the confessional he told the King what he had seen and what he feared, and as the hard words fell from his lips, the carved images of the Saints shook their heads as if they wished to say, "It is not so: Elsa is innocent."

But the Archbishop interpreted it otherwise, thinking that they too were bearing witness against her—that they were shaking their heads at the thought of her sin.

Two great tears rolled down the King's cheeks, and he went home with doubt in his heart. At night he pretended to sleep, but sleep was far from his eyes, and he noticed how Elsa rose from her bed.

Every night this was repeated, and on each occasion he followed her softly, and saw her disappear into the little room.

Day by day his look became darker. Elsa noticed the change; she did not understand the reason, but it alarmed her, and what anguish of heart did she not suffer for her brothers! Her salt tears rolled down on the royal velvet and purple, and lay there like glittering diamonds.

All who saw her splendor wished that they, too, were Queens. She was by this time nearly at the end of her

THE WILD SWANS

task; only one shirt was still unfinished, but she had no more fiber, and not a single nettle.

Once more, for the last time, she had to go down to the churchyard and gather a few handfuls. She thought with terror of the solitary walk and of the hideous creatures who were there; but her will was as firm as her trust in Providence.

Elsa went: but the King and the Archbishop followed her. They saw her disappear through the wicket-gate of the churchyard, and when they came nearer they caught sight of the hideous creatures sitting on the tombstones, just as Elsa had seen them; and the King turned away, for he thought that she, too, was one of them—she whose head had that very evening rested on his breast.

“Let the people judge her!” he said; and the people condemned her to be burnt at the stake.

From the magnificent royal palace she was taken to a dark and damp cell, in which the wind whistled through the grated windows. Instead of velvet and silks they gave her the bundle of nettles which she had gathered—on this she could lay her head. The coarse burning shirts which she had knitted, they gave her as mattress and coverlet; but they could have left her nothing of greater value in her eyes, and with a prayer to Heaven, she again began her task.

Outside, the street-boys sang jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a friendly word.

Towards evening a swan fluttered against the bars of the window. It was her youngest brother, who had found his sister, and she sobbed aloud for joy, although she knew that the next night would perhaps

THE WILD SWANS

be her last: but her work was very nearly finished, and her brothers were near.

The Archbishop came to stay with her during the last few hours; this he had promised the King. But she shook her head, and entreated him by looks and gestures to leave her, for this night she had to finish her work, or all would be in vain—her pain, her tears, and her sleepless nights. The Archbishop left her with bitter reproaches; but poor Elsa knew that she was innocent, and continued her work.

The little mice ran about the floor, dragging the nettles to her feet, so as to help her a little: and the thrush sat outside the grating of the window the whole night long, singing his sweetest song to give her courage.

The day was just breaking, it wanted yet an hour of sunrise, when the eleven brothers came to the gates of the palace and asked to be brought before the King. They were told that this was impossible, for it was still night; the King was asleep, and must not be disturbed. They prayed, they threatened, the guard came up, and the King himself at last came out and asked what was the matter.

But at that very moment the sun rose, and the brothers were no longer to be seen; but away over the palace flew eleven wild swans.

The people were streaming out through the gates of the town to see the witch burned.

A wretched horse drew the cart on which she sat: they had dressed her in a garment of coarse sackcloth, and her lovely, long hair hung loose around her pretty head. Her cheeks were deadly pale, and her lips moved silently, whilst her fingers were weaving the green

THE WILD SWANS

fibers, for even on her way to death she would not give up her work.

Ten shirts lay at her feet, the eleventh she was still knitting. The mob jeered at her—

“Look at the witch, how she mutters! She has no hymn-book in her hands; no—there she sits with her hateful witchery. Tear it from her! tear it into a thousand pieces!”

And they surged around her, and tried to tear the shirts into fragments; but eleven white swans came flying into their midst, settled upon the cart, and flapped with their great wings, so that the mob gave way in terror.

“That is a sign from Heaven—she is surely innocent,” whispered many, but they dared not say so aloud.

Then the executioner seized her by the hand—instantly she threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and there stood eleven handsome princes: but the youngest had a swan’s wing instead of an arm, for she had not quite finished his shirt.

“Now I may speak,” she said, “I am innocent!”

And the people, who saw what had happened, bowed before her as before a saint; but she sank lifeless into her brothers’ arms, for the suspense, anguish, and grief had overcome her.

“Yes, innocent she is,” said the oldest brother, and then he told the whole story.

While he spoke, the air was filled with fragrance as from a million roses, for every piece of wood in the pile had taken root and sent forth branches. There stood a fragrant hedge, tall and dense, covered with red roses: and at the top was a single rose, dazzlingly white, and shining like a star: this the King plucked

THE WILD SWANS

and placed on Elsa's bosom, and she awoke, with peace and happiness in her heart.

And all the church bells began to ring of their own accord, and the birds came in great flocks, and a wedding procession returned to the palace such as no King had ever seen before.





The Swineherd

THERE was once a poor Prince, who possessed a very small kingdom. It was, however, large enough to marry upon, and he greatly wished to find a wife. Now, it was certainly somewhat bold of him to say to the Emperor's daughter: "Will you have me?" but he did venture it, for his name was famous far and wide. There were hundreds of Princesses who would have said: "Thank you," into the bargain, but we shall see what she said. Now, listen.

THE SWINEHERD

On the grave of the Prince's father grew a rose-tree. Oh, what a beautiful rose-tree it was! It only bloomed once every five years, and even then it bore but a single rose; but what a rose! Its scent was so sweet that whoever smelt it forgot all sorrow and trouble.

The Prince also possessed a nightingale that could sing as if all the most beautiful melodies were collected in its little throat. Both the rose and the nightingale the Princess was to have; so they were put into large silver boxes and sent to her. The Emperor ordered the presents to be taken into the large hall where the Princess was playing at "visiting" with her maids-of-honor. They never did anything else. When she saw the large boxes containing the presents the Princess clapped her hands with joy.

"I hope it is a little pussy-cat," she said: but out came the beautiful rose.

"Oh, how wonderfully it is made!" said all the maids-of-honor. "It is more than nice—it is charming."

But the Princess touched it, and she almost began to cry. "Fie, Papa!" she said; "it is not artificial—it is only a natural rose!"

"Fie!" said all the maids-of-honor; "it is only a natural rose!"

"Let us first see what is in the other box before we get angry," said the Emperor: and out came the nightingale. It sang so sweetly that it was impossible at the moment to say anything in dispraise of it.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" said the maids-of-honor, for they all spoke French, each worse than the other.

"How that bird reminds me of the late Emperor's musical-box," said an old cavalier. "It has exactly the same tone, and the same expression."

THE SWINEHERD

"Yes," said the Emperor, and he wept like a little child.

"I should scarcely think that it is a real bird," said the Princess.

"Oh, yes; it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

"Then let the bird fly away," said the Princess; but she refused to allow the Prince to call.

The Prince, however, was not to be frightened; he smeared his face with brown and black dye, pressed his cap down over his face, and knocked at the door. "Good day, Emperor," he said; "could I not get a situation here in the palace?"

"Well, there are so many who ask for an appointment," said the Emperor; "but let me see: I just need a person to look after the pigs, for we have a great many of them."

So the Prince was employed as Imperial swineherd. He received a poor little room down by the pig-sty, and there he had to stay. But the whole day long he sat and worked, and by the evening he had made a nice little pot with tiny bells all round it, so that when the pot boiled the bells rang out merrily, and played the old tune:—

"Oh, my darling Augustine!
All is lost, lost, lost!"

But the most peculiar thing was, that by holding one's fingers in the steam of the pot, one could smell what kind of meals were being prepared in each kitchen in the town. You see, it was quite a different thing from the rose.

Now, the Princess was out walking with all her

THE SWINEHERD

maids-of-honor, and when she heard the tune she stopped at once, and looked greatly pleased, for she, too, could play "Oh, my darling Augustine." This was the only tune that she could play on the piano, but then she played it with only one finger.



"Why, that is the tune I play," she exclaimed; "he must be a well-educated swineherd. Listen! you must go in and ask him what the price of that instrument is."

So one of the maids-of-honor had to go in, but she first put on a pair of slippers.

THE SWINEHERD

"What do you want for the pot?" asked the maid-of-honor.

"I want ten kisses from the Princess," said the swineherd.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the maid-of-honor.

"I cannot make it cheaper," said the swineherd.

"Well, what does he say?" asked the Princess.

"I really can't repeat it," said the maid-of-honor; "it is too horrible."

"Well, you can whisper it." So the lady whispered it.

"He is very rude," said the Princess; and walked away. But when she had gone a little way, the bells began to ring again, very sweetly:—

"Oh, my darling Augustine!
All is lost, lost, lost!"

"Listen," said the Princess; "ask him if he will take ten kisses from my maids-of-honor."

"No, thank you," said the swineherd; "ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep the pot."

"Oh, how tiresome!" said the Princess; "well, you must stand round me so that nobody can see it." And the maids-of-honor stood round her, the swineherd received the ten kisses, and the Princess got the pot. Then there was great rejoicing! In the evening, and the whole day long, the pot was kept boiling; there was not a kitchen in the whole town of which they did not know what it had cooked, at the chamberlain's as well as at the shoemaker's. The maids-of-honor danced and clapped their hands.

"We know who is going to have sweet soup and

THE SWINEHERD

pancakes; we know who is going to have gruel and cutlets."

"How very interesting, very interesting indeed!" said the lady superintendent.

"Yes, but you must keep quiet," said the Princess, "for I am the Emperor's daughter." "Quite so!" said everyone.

The swineherd—that is to say, the Prince, although so far as they knew, he was only an ordinary swineherd—did not let a day go past without making something. One day he made a rattle. When he swung it round it played all the waltzes, schottisches, and polkas that had been composed since the creation of the world.

"This is superb," said the Princess, as she went past; "I have never heard such a beautiful composition before. Go in and ask him what that instrument costs; but I won't kiss him."

"He wants a hundred kisses from the Princess," said the maid-of-honor, who went in to ask him.

"He must be mad," exclaimed the Princess, and went off, but when she had gone a little way, she stopped. "One must encourage art," she said. "I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him he shall have ten kisses, as yesterday; the rest he can have from my maids-of-honor."

"Oh, but we would rather not!" said the maids-of-honor.

"That is all nonsense," said the Princess; "if I can kiss, you can kiss too. You must remember that I give you board and wages." So the maid-of-honor had to go down to the swineherd again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess," said he, "or each shall keep his own."

THE SWINEHERD

"Stand round," she said, and all the maids-of-honor stood round while he kissed the Princess.

"What is that crowd down by the pig-sty?" said the Emperor, who had stepped on to the balcony. He rubbed his eyes and put his spectacles on. "Yes, it is the maids-of-honor in mischief again. I must see what they are doing." So he pulled his slippers up behind for they were shoes which he had trodden down. Mercy! how he hurried. When he came into the yard he walked very softly, and the maids-of-honor were so busy in counting the kisses, so that everything should be fair, and that the swineherd should not get too many, and yet not too few, that they did not notice the Emperor. He stood on tiptoe. "What!" said he, when he saw that the swineherd and the Princess were kissing each other; and he hit them on the head with his slipper, just as the swineherd received his eighty-sixth kiss. "Be off with you!" cried the Emperor, for he was angry, and both the Princess and the swineherd were expelled from the empire. There she stood crying, and the swineherd scolded her, while the rain poured in torrents. "Oh! miserable wretch that I am," said the Princess; "if I had only taken the handsome Prince. Oh! how unhappy I am."

But the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the black and brown dye from his face, threw away the shabby clothes, and came forward in princely attire, so handsome that the Princess had to bow to him. "I have learned to despise you," said he. "You would not have an honest prince, you did not value the rose and the nightingale, but you kissed a swineherd for a mere plaything; now you can do what you like." And so he went back into his kingdom, locked the door,

THE SWINEHERD

and fastened the bolt. And she might stand outside
and sing:—

“Oh, my darling Augustine
All is lost, lost, lost!”





The Wicked Prince

THERE was once a vain and wicked Prince, whose sole thought was to conquer every country in the world, and to inspire fear by his name alone. He went forth with fire and sword; his soldiers trampled down the corn in the fields, and set fire to the peasants' houses, so that the red flames licked the leaves from the trees and the fruit hung burnt from the black charred branches. Many a poor

THE WICKED PRINCE

mother, with her naked baby in her arms, took refuge behind the smoking walls; but the soldiers searched for them, and if they succeeded in finding them, then began their demoniac fury; evil spirits could not have acted worse. But to the Prince it seemed right; his power increased day by day, his name was feared by all, and fortune followed him in his evil acts.

From conquered villages he brought home gold and great treasures; and in his capital was massed a vaster amount of wealth than anywhere else in the world. He erected magnificent palaces, churches, and triumphal arches, and everyone who saw this splendor said: "What a great Prince!" They did not think of all the misery he had brought upon other countries, nor did they hear the sighs and groans that rose from the blackened ruins.

The Prince looked at his gold, and at his magnificent buildings, and thought, like the crowd: "What a great Prince am I! But," he said to himself, "I must have more—much more; no power must be compared with, no power must exceed, mine." And so he went out to make war against his neighbors, and conquered them all.

When he drove through the streets, he bound the captive kings with golden chains to his chariot, and during his banquets they had to lie at the feet of the Prince and his courtiers, and receive the crumbs of bread that were thrown to them.

The Prince caused his statue to be erected in the squares and in the royal palaces, and he even wished to place it in the churches, before the altars; but the priests said: "Prince, you are great, but God is greater; we dare it not."

THE WICKED PRINCE

"Then," said the wicked Prince, "I will conquer even Heaven"; and in the pride of his heart he caused a costly ship to be built, in which he could sail through the air. It was many-colored, like a peacock's tail, and looked as if it were studded with a thousand eyes; but each eye was the muzzle of a gun. The



Prince sat in the middle of the ship; he had only to press a spring, when a thousand bullets would fly out, and the guns would become charged again as before. Hundreds of mighty eagles were harnessed at the bow of the ship, and thus they flew up towards the sun.

The earth lay far beneath; at first it seemed, with

THE WICKED PRINCE

its mountains and forests, like a plowed field when the green peeps forth from the overturned turf; then it resembled a flat map, and at last it disappeared in mist and cloud.

Higher and higher flew the eagles; then God sent one of His many angels. The wicked Prince directed thousands of bullets against him, but they all fell back like hail from the angel's glittering wings; one drop of blood, one only, fell from the white feathers of his wings. But this drop fell on the ship in which the Prince sat; it burnt its way in, and weighing like a thousand hundredweights of lead, dragged the ship headlong towards the earth. The strong pinions of the eagles broke, the wind roared round the Prince's head, and the clouds, formed of the smoke of burned cities, shaped themselves into threatening monsters, some like huge crabs, stretching their strong claws out towards him, others like rolling rocks, others again like dragons spitting fire.

The Prince lay half dead in the ship, which at last was caught by, and remained suspended in, the thick branches of the trees in the forest.

"I will conquer God," he said. "I have sworn it; my will must be done!" For seven years he caused magnificent ships to be built, with which he could sail through the air, had lightning rays forged from the hardest steel, for he intended to storm the fortress of Heaven.

From all his kingdoms he gathered armies so immense that when drawn up in rank and file they covered a surface of several square miles; they went on board the costly ships, and the Prince himself was approaching his own vessel, when God sent a swarm

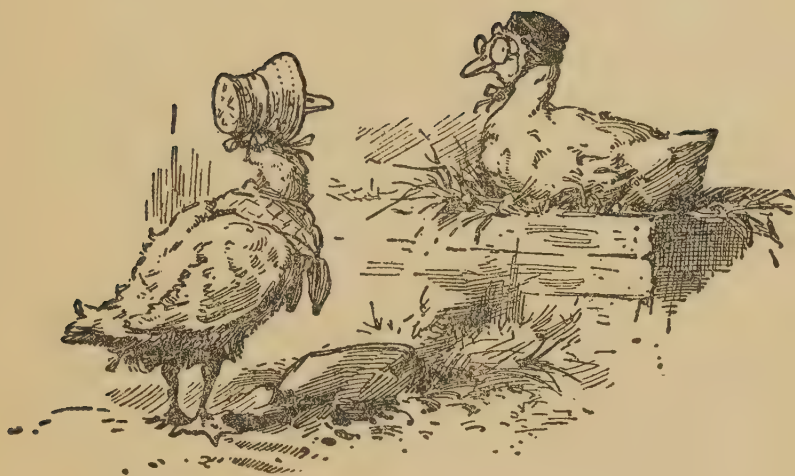
THE WICKED PRINCE

of gnats—only a little swarm of gnats. They buzzed round the Prince and settled on his face and hands; he drew his sword in anger, but only struck the empty air: the gnats he could not hit.

He then ordered costly hangings to be brought; these should be folded around him so that no gnats could touch him with their stings, and it was done as he commanded. But a single little gnat had attached itself to the inner side of the tapestry; it crept into the Prince's ear and stung him there.

It burned like fire, and the poison penetrated to his brain; he tore himself free from the hangings, rent his clothes to pieces, and danced naked before his rude, savage soldiers, who now jeered at the mad Prince—at him who had wished to conquer Heaven, and was himself vanquished by a single little gnat.





The Ugly Duckling

IT was beautiful out in the country, for it was summer-time. The cornfields were yellow, the oats were green, the hay was put up in stacks in the meadows, and the stork strutted about on his long red legs and chattered Egyptian, for this was the language he had learned from his mother. All around the fields and meadows were great forests, and in the midst of these forests lay deep lakes. Yes, it was really beautiful out in the country! In the bright sunshine lay an old country-seat, surrounded by canals, and from the stone walls down to the water grew large

THE UGLY DUCKLING

burdocks, so high that under the tallest little children could stand upright. It was as wild a spot as the farthest depths of the forest; and here sat a duck on her nest. She had nearly hatched out her little ones, but she was growing tired, for it had taken her a long time, and she seldom received a visit. The other ducks preferred to swim about in the canals rather than run up to sit under the burdocks and gossip with her. At last one egg after the other began to crack. "Peep-peep!" they cried, for all the yolks had become living, and were popping their heads out.

"Quack! quack!" she said, and the little ones hurried out as fast as they could, and went peering about under the green leaves. The mother let them look as much as they pleased, for green is good for the eyes.

"How large the world is!" said all the ducklings, for they had very much more room now than when they were lying in the egg-shells.

"Do you think that this is the whole world?" said the mother. "No, indeed; it stretches far away, right to the other side of the garden and into the parson's field; but I have never been there yet. I suppose you are all here?" she asked, getting up. "No, they are not all out: the biggest egg is still here; I wonder how long it is going to be?—I am getting tired of it," and then she sat down again.

"Well, how are you getting on?" said an old duck who came to pay her a visit.

"This egg takes such a long time," said the duck who was sitting. "It will not crack, but you should see all my little ducklings. They are the prettiest little mites that ever were seen—but they are all like their

THE UGLY DUCKLING

father—the good-for-nothing who never comes to see me.”

“Let me see the egg that will not crack,” said the old duck. “It may be a turkey’s egg. I was once cheated in that way; and I had such a bother and worry with those young ones, for they were all frightened of the water. I could not get them to venture in. I quacked and clacked, but it was all in vain. Let me see the egg.—Yes; it must be a turkey’s egg; you should leave it alone and teach the other children to swim.”

“Well, I will just sit a little while longer on it,” said the duck; “I have been sitting so long, I may just as well sit out the regulation time of the Zoölogical Gardens.”

“Just as you please,” said the old duck, and away she went.

At last the large egg cracked. “Peep! peep!” said the young one, as he waddled out. Oh, how very large and ugly he was!

The duck looked at him.

“Well, this is a terribly big Duckling,” she said; “none of the others look like him; can it really be a young turkey? Well, we shall soon see. Into the water he must go, even if I have to push him in myself.”

The next day the weather was bright and beautiful, the sun was shining on all the huge burdocks, and the mother with the whole of her family went down the canal. Splash! down she went into the water. “Quack! quack!” she said, and one duckling after the other tumbled in. The water went over their heads, but they soon came up again, and swam capitally, their

THE UGLY DUCKLING

legs seeming to move of themselves. They were all in the water, even the ugly gray Duckling.

"No, this is not a turkey," she said; "see how nicely he uses his legs, how gracefully he carries himself. He is my own child; in fact, he is rather handsome when you come to look at him. Quack! quack! now come along with me, and I will take you out into the world, and introduce you to the poultry-yard; but keep near me, so that no one may tread on you; and—mind the cat!"

And so they came into the poultry-yard. There was a terrible to-do in the yard, for two families were fighting about an eel's head, and the cat got it after all. "That is the way of the world," said the mother duck, whetting her beak, for she also wanted the eel's head. "And now use your legs, and let me see that you can bustle about, and make a nice bow with your necks to the old duck yonder. She is the most aristocratic of all the fowls present; she is of Spanish blood; that is why she is so fat, and has a red rag round one leg. That is something very extraordinary—indeed, the greatest distinction that a duck can receive. It means that they would not lose her on any account, and that she shall be recognized by man and beast. Now hurry up; don't put your legs together—a well-trained duckling puts its legs far away from each other, just like father and mother—that is the way! Now bend your neck and say 'quack.'"

And so they did, but all the other ducks in the yard looked at them, and said quite distinctly: "Well, now we are going to have this new lot, too—as if there were not enough of us already. Oh! look at that ugly Duckling—we won't stand him!" And one of the

THE UGLY DUCKLING

ducks flew at him and bit him on the back of the head.

"Let him alone," said his mother; "he is not doing any harm to anyone."

"But he is so big and uncommon," said the duck that had bitten him; "so he must be knocked about a little."

"Those children of yours are very pretty, mother," said the old duck with the red rag round her leg. "They are all pretty, except one; he is a failure, and I wish you could re-make him."

"That is impossible, your highness," said the mother duck; "he is not pretty, but he has a very good temper, and he swims beautifully, quite as well as any of the others—indeed, I may say even better. I daresay he will grow handsome in time, and no doubt he will get smaller. He has been lying too long in the egg; that is why his shape is not quite right." So she scratched his neck and stroked him all over. "Besides, he is a drake," she said, "and therefore it doesn't much matter. I think he will be very sturdy; he will get along very well."

"The other ducklings are pretty enough," said the old duck; "just make yourself at home, and if you find an eel's head, you may bring it to me."

So they made themselves at home; but the poor Duckling that came out of the last egg, and looked so ugly, was beaten, knocked about, and sneered at both by the ducks and the fowls. "He is too big," they all said, and the turkey-cock, who was born with spurs, and therefore thought himself an emperor, puffed himself out like a ship in full sail, and went straight up to the Duckling and gobbled until he was quite red in the face. The poor Duckling did not know whether to

THE UGLY DUCKLING

stand still or walk away. He felt quite miserable, because he was so ugly, and was the butt of the whole poultry-yard.

Thus the first day went by, and afterwards it became worse and worse. The poor Duckling was driven about by everyone; even his brothers and sisters were angry with him, and said frequently: "If only the cat would take you, you silly thing!" And the mother duck said: "If only you were far away!" And the ducks bit him, and the chickens pecked at him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked at him with her foot. One day he flew over the fence, and even the little birds in the bush were frightened away. "It is because I am so ugly," thought the Duckling, and he shut his eyes; but he ran on all the same, until he came to the big moor where the wild ducks lived. Here he lay all night, feeling very tired and miserable. In the morning the wild ducks flew up and looked at their new companion.

"Where do you come from?" they asked, and the Duckling turned in all directions, and bowed to them as well as he could. "You are uncommonly ugly," said the wild ducks, "but that is all the same to us, so long as you don't marry into our family."

Poor thing! he had no thought of getting married; if only they would allow him to lie in the rushes and drink a little of the marsh water.

Here he lay for two whole days, and then came two wild geese, or rather wild ganders. They had not been long out of the egg, and that is why they were so impertinent.

"Look here," they said, "you are so ugly that we have taken a fancy to you. Would you like to come

THE UGLY DUCKLING

along with us and become a bird-of-passage? On the next moor, not far from here, there are some lovely wild geese, all unmarried, and they can all say 'hiss! hiss!' Although you are so ugly, it would be a chance of making your fortune."

Bang! Bang! sounded in the air; the two ganders fell down amongst the rushes, and the water became blood-red. Again came the sound—bang! bang! and the whole flock of wild geese flew up from the reeds. Then there was another report. It was a large shooting party, and the sportsmen were lying all round the moor, while some of them were sitting on the branches of trees that overhung the rushes. The blue smoke rose in clouds through the dark trees and floated away across the water.

Down came the dogs in the mud—splash! splash! Reeds and rushes were bent down on all sides, and the poor Duckling was terribly frightened. He turned his head round to hide it under his wing, but just at that moment a huge dog stood before him, his tongue hanging out of his mouth and a horrible glare in his eyes. He thrust his nose close to the Duckling, showing his sharp teeth, and then splash! away he went without touching him. "Oh! Heaven be thanked!" sighed the poor Duckling; "I am so ugly that even the dog would not bite me"; and he lay quite still, while the shots were whizzing among the reeds, for the sportsmen fired again and again.

It was late in the day before things began to get quiet, but the poor Duckling did not dare to move. He waited for several hours before he began to look around, and then he hurried away from the moor as fast as he could. Over fields and meadows he ran, but

THE UGLY DUCKLING

as it was windy it was difficult for him to get along. Towards evening he reached a humble little cottage; it was so dilapidated that it did not know on which side to fall, and therefore it continued to stand up.

The wind was whistling around the Duckling, and he was obliged to sit down in order not to be blown away. The weather was getting worse and worse, when he suddenly noticed that the door of the cottage had broken away from one of its hinges, and hung so



crookedly that he could just creep through the crack into the room, and this he did.

Here lived an old woman with her Cat and her Hen.

The Cat, which she called Sonny, could arch his back, and purr, and could even give out sparks, but only when you stroked him the wrong way. The Hen had small stumpy legs, and therefore they called her Chick-a-biddy Shortshanks. She laid plenty of eggs, and the old woman loved her as her own child.

In the morning the strange Duckling was at once discovered, and the Cat began to purr and the Hen to cackle.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

"What is the matter?" said the old woman, peering around, and as she did not see well, she thought that the Duckling was a fat duck that had gone astray. "This is a capital find," she thought; "now I shall have duck's eggs, if only it is not a drake—but that we must find out." So the Duckling was put on a trial for three weeks, but no eggs came.

The Cat was master of the house and the Hen was mistress, and so they always said: "We and the world"; for they considered that they were half the world, and the better half. The Duckling thought that others might have a different opinion, but the Hen would not agree with this. "Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No—well, then, you will have to hold your tongue."

And the Cat said: "Can you arch your back, or purr, or give out sparks? No—well, then, you must not have an opinion when other people talk"; and the Duckling sat in a corner in a bad temper. Then he began to think of the fresh air and the sunshine, and felt a strange longing to fly out over the water. At last he could keep it to himself no longer: he had to tell the Hen about it.

"What is the matter with you?" she said; "you have nothing to do—that is why you get such fancies into your head. If you could lay an egg, or purr, it would be all right."

"But it is so lovely to swim on the water," said the Duckling, "so nice to feel the water close over your head when you plunge down to the bottom!"

"A real pleasure that must be!" said the Hen; "you are certainly going mad! Just ask the Cat, who is the wisest person I know, if *he* likes to float on the water or plunge below—I say nothing of my own

THE UGLY DUCKLING

opinion. Or ask our mistress, the old woman—there is not a wiser old woman in the world—do you think that *she* would like to float on the water or feel it closing over her head?”

“You don’t understand me,” said the Duckling.

“Well, if *we* don’t understand you, I should like to know who would. You don’t mean to say that you are wiser than the Cat and the old woman, not to mention myself? Don’t make a fool of yourself, child; and thank your Creator for all the good that He has done for you. Have you not got into a warm room, and into good company, from which you can learn something? You are a mere chatterbox; your company is not agreeable. I speak for your good, in telling you these unpleasant truths; by that you may know your true friends. See that you learn how to lay eggs, and how to purr and give out sparks.”

“I think I will go out into the wide world,” said the Duckling.

“Yes, do!” said the Hen. So the Duckling went. He floated on the water, and dived beneath, but he was avoided by all other animals, because of his ugliness.

Autumn came, the leaves in the forest turned yellow and brown, and the wind took hold of them and made them dance about. Up in the air it looked very cold; the clouds were heavy with hail and snow, and on the stone wall stood a raven, shivering, and crying, “Croak! croak!” Yes, the mere thought of it was enough to make one feel cold, and the poor Duckling certainly had not a very good time.

One evening, as the sun was setting, a whole flight of beautiful great birds rose out of the bushes. The

THE UGLY DUCKLING

Duckling had never seen anything so pretty as these birds, which were shining white, and had long, slender necks. They were swans, and they uttered a peculiar cry as they spread their magnificent broad wings and flew away from these cold regions to warmer climes, across the wide seas. They rose high, very high, in the air, and the ugly Duckling felt quite a strange sensation as he watched them.

He whirled round and round in the water like a wheel, stretched his neck after them high up in the air, and uttered a cry, so loud and strange that he frightened himself.

Ah! he could not forget those beautiful birds, those happy birds, and when he could no longer see them, he dived right to the bottom, so that when he came up again he was nearly out of breath. He did not know the name of the birds, nor whither they were flying, yet he loved them as he had never loved anyone else. He did not envy them; how could he think of wishing himself so beautiful? He would have been glad if only the ducks had endured him in their company—poor, ugly thing that he was!

And the winter grew very cold! The Duckling had to swim about in the water so as to keep himself from freezing, and every night the hole in which he was swimming became smaller and smaller. It was freezing so hard that the ice cracked; and the Duckling had to move his legs constantly to and fro to prevent the water from freezing up altogether. At last he became exhausted, and lay quite still, and so he froze fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came along and saw him. He went out to the Duckling, knocked a

THE UGLY DUCKLING

hole in the ice with his wooden shoe, and took him home to his wife.

Here he was brought to life again. The children wanted to play with him, but the Duckling thought they might hurt him, and in his fright he flew into the milk-basin, and the milk was spilt all over the floor. The woman screamed and threw her hands up in the air; then he flew down into the butter-tub, from there to the meal-barrel, and out again. What a state he was in! The woman screamed and struck at him with the fire-irons, the children tumbled over one another in trying to catch the poor Duckling, and they laughed and shouted. Luckily the door was open, and out he flew through the bushes, down on to the newly fallen snow, where he lay quite exhausted. It would, however, be too sad a story to tell of all the want and misery he suffered during that hard winter.

One day, as he was lying on the moor among the rushes, the sun again began to shine warmly; the larks were singing; the beautiful spring had come!

All at once he lifted his wings: they beat the air more strongly than before, and bore him easily aloft. Before he knew what had happened, he found himself in a large garden where the apple-trees stood in bloom, and where sweet scented clusters of lilac hung on the long green boughs, bending down towards the winding river. It was delightful here, on this beautiful spring day; and suddenly through the thicket came three beautiful white swans. They preened their feathers, and floated gently on the water. The Duckling recognized the beautiful creatures, and was overcome by a strange feeling of sadness.

"I will fly over to them, those royal birds, and they

THE UGLY DUCKLING

will kill me, because I, who am so ugly, dare to approach them. But after all, it is better to be killed by them than to be bitten by the ducks, pecked by the chickens, kicked by the maid who looks after the poultry-yard, and suffer misery in the winter." So he flew down into the water and swam towards the beautiful swans. They looked at him, and drifted towards him, with outspread wings.

"Kill me!" said the poor creature, and bent his head down towards the surface of the water, awaiting death. But what did he see in the clear water? He saw his own image, but he was no longer a clumsy, dark gray bird, ugly and hateful: he was himself a swan! It does not matter if one is brought up among the ducks so long as one is hatched from a swan's egg. He felt quite glad that he had gone through all this want and misery; for he could now realize all the happiness that greeted him.

The large swans swam round him and stroked him with their beaks. Into the garden came some little children. They threw bread and corn into the water, and the smallest of them cried: "There is a new one!" and the other children shouted joyously: "Yes, a new one has arrived"; and they clapped their hands, and danced round and round their father and mother, throwing bread-crumbs and biscuits into the river.

"The new one is the prettiest," they said, "he is so young and so lovely." And the old swans bowed to him; but he felt so bashful that he stuck his head between his wings; he did not know what was the matter; he was too happy, but not at all proud, for a good heart never becomes proud. He thought of how he had been persecuted and despised, and now he heard

THE UGLY DUCKLING

them all say that he was the prettiest, the most beautiful of birds.

And the lilac bowed down its branches to him, and the sun shone warm and bright. Then he rustled his feathers, curbed his slender neck, and cried joyfully from the depths of his heart: "I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was only The Ugly Duckling!"



The Fir Tree

OUT in the forest grew a pretty little Fir Tree. It had a good situation, for it stood well in the sunlight, and had sufficient air, while all around were many larger companions, both pines and firs. But the little Fir Tree was so busy with growing that it did not think of the warm sun and the fresh air; nor did it take any notice of the peasant children who roamed about and chattered while they gathered strawberries or raspberries. They would often come with a whole potful, or with the fruit strung upon a straw, and, sitting down beside the little Tree, would say: "Oh! what a very pretty little Tree this is!" But the Fir Tree was not at all pleased to hear this.

The next year it grew one long joint taller, and the year after it had grown yet another, for on a Fir Tree you can always see by the number of rings how many years it has lived.

"Ah! if only I were as tall a tree as the others," sighed the little Fir; "I could then spread my branches far around, and look out from the top of my crown over the wide world. Birds would come and nestle between my boughs, and when the wind blew I could nod just as proudly as the rest."

It took no pleasure in the sunshine, nor in the birds, nor in the rosy clouds that morning and evening went floating past.

THE FIR TREE

In the winter-time, when all around the snow lay dazzlingly white, a hare would now and then come running along and jump right over the little Tree. How ashamed the Fir Tree was! But two winters went by, and when the third year came, the Tree was so big that the hare had to go round it.

"Oh! to grow, to grow, to be large, to be tall, to be old—that is the only desirable thing in the world," thought the Tree.

In the autumn the wood-cutters came and felled some of the tallest trees. This happened every year, and the young Fir, which was now beginning to be grown up, trembled as its huge companions fell with a crash to the ground. The branches were cut away, and they looked quite naked, long and slender—indeed, it was nearly impossible to recognize them. Then they were placed on carts, and horses hauled them away out of the forest. To what place were they going? What was to become of them?

When, in the spring, the Swallow and the Stork came, the Tree said to them: "Do you not know to what place they are taken? Have you not met them?"

The Swallow knew nothing about it; but the Stork looked thoughtful, nodded its head, and said: "Yes, I think I know; I met many ships when I flew away from Egypt, and on the ships were magnificent masts. These, I think, were the trees, for they smelt of pine. They were very stately, I can assure you."

"If only I were tall enough to fly away over the sea! What is it—the sea; and how does it really look?"

"Well, that would take rather a long time to explain," said the Stork, and he went away.

"Rejoice while you are young," said the Sunbeams.

THE FIR TREE

“Rejoice in your fresh growth, and in the young life that is in you.” And the wind kissed the Fir Tree, the dew shed tears over it; but this the Tree did not understand.

When Christmas-time approached, many young trees were felled—trees that were not even as tall or old as our Fir Tree, which never felt any rest, but was always wishing to get away. These young trees—and they were just the prettiest of all—were allowed to keep their branches; they were laid on wagons, and the horses hauled them out of the forest. “Whither are they going?” asked the Fir Tree. “They are not taller than I—in fact, there was one that was much smaller. Why are they allowed to keep all their branches? To what place are they taken?”

“We know,” chirped the Sparrows; “down in the town we have peeped in through the window-panes: we know where they go. They are honored with the greatest splendor and pomp that you can imagine! We have peeped in through the window, and seen them planted in the middle of the warm room, and dressed with the most beautiful things—gilded apples, ginger-cakes, toys, and hundreds of candles.”

“And then,” said the Fir Tree, while every branch trembled, “and then what happens?”

“We have not seen any more, but what we did see was marvelous.”

“I wonder whether I have been born to tread this glorious path,” cried the Fir Tree, full of joy. “It would be even better than crossing the seas. I am weary with longing. How I wish it were Christmas now; I am quite as tall and well-grown as the others that were taken away last year. Ah! if only I were

THE FIR TREE

already on the wagon—if I were in the warm room, surrounded by all that pomp and splendor! And then—yes—something even better will happen—something even more charming—or why should they adorn me so? There must certainly be something even more



delightful still—but what is it? Oh! how I long for it! I scarcely know what is the matter with me.”

“Rejoice with us,” said the Air and the Sunshine; “rejoice in your fresh youth out under the bright sky.” But it would not rejoice, although it grew taller and taller. Winter and summer it stood there in its dark

THE FIR TREE

green foliage. Everybody who saw it said: "This is a beautiful tree!" and at Christmas it was felled the first of all. The ax cut deep through the sap, and the Tree fell with a sigh to the earth. It felt a sensation of faintness, and could not even think of its happiness. Now it was sad at parting from home—from the spot where it had grown. It knew that it would see the dear old companions no more, nor the little bushes and flowers that grew around; nor, perhaps, the birds. The parting and the journey were, indeed, by no means pleasant.

The Tree did not recover until it was unloaded with other trees in the yard. It heard a man say: "This is a beautiful tree; we shall only want this one." Then came two servants in full livery and carried the Fir Tree into a large and beautiful hall. Portraits hung upon the walls, and by the huge fireplace stood china vases, with lions on the covers. There were rocking-chairs, silk covered sofas, and large tables covered with picture-books worth hundreds and hundreds of pounds—at least, the children said so. The Fir Tree was put into a big tub filled with sand; but nobody could see that it was a tub, for it was draped with foliage and placed on a large carpet of many colors. Oh! how the Tree trembled. What was going to happen? Both the servants and the young ladies began to decorate the Tree. On one branch they hung small nets cut out of colored paper, and each net was filled with sweetmeats; on others were gilded apples and walnuts, looking just as if they had grown there. More than a hundred little candles, red, blue, and white, were fastened to the branches; dolls as real as life—the Tree had never seen such things before—were standing

THE FIR TREE

amongst the foliage; and high up at the top shone a great star of tinsel gold—it was splendid; it was simply magnificent!

“This evening,” they all said, “this evening it will shine.”

“Ah!” thought the Tree, “how I wish it were evening already—if only the candles were lit; but what will happen then? I wonder if the trees from the forest will come to look at me; I wonder if the Sparrows will fly against the pane; shall I grow fast here, or stand thus adorned through winter and summer?” Well, at last, it knew all about it; but it had real barkache from mere longing, and barkache is as bad for a tree as headache for a human being.

At last the candles were lit. How beautiful! how brilliant it was! And the Tree trembled in all its branches, so that one of the candles set fire to a green twig, and this was really painful. “Oh, dear! oh, dear!” cried the young ladies, putting out the fire as quickly as possible. After this the tree did not even dare to tremble. It was quite terrified—so much afraid indeed of burning some of its ornaments, that it was dazed in the midst of all its splendor.

All at once, the folding-doors were thrown open, and a number of children rushed in as if they intended to overturn the whole Tree. The elders followed more slowly. The little ones stood silent with astonishment, but only for a moment; then they shouted till the room rang, and danced round the Tree, while one present after another was plucked from its branches.

“What are they doing?” thought the Tree; “what is going to happen?” The candles burned down to the twigs, and one after the other they were put out. Then

THE FIR TREE

the children were allowed to rifle the Tree. How they rushed at it, so that every branch cracked again; if the top and the tinsel star had not been fastened to the ceiling, the whole Tree would have fallen over. The children danced about with their pretty toys; no one paid any attention to the Tree except an old nurse, who peered through the branches, and that was only to see whether a fig or an apple had been forgotten.

"A story! a story!" cried the children, drawing a fat little man towards the Tree. He sat down just underneath it. "Here we shall be in the green country," he said, "and the Tree will have the advantage of listening to my story; but I am only going to tell you one. Would you like to hear the history of Ivede Avede, or would you rather hear of Humpty-Dumpty, who fell downstairs, and yet was raised to honor and married the princess?"

"Ivede Avede!" cried some; "Humpty-Dumpty!" cried others; what a screaming there was! Only the Christmas Tree stood silent and pensive. "And am I to do nothing?" it thought; but it had already done all that it was expected to do.

So the man told the story of Humpty-Dumpty, who fell downstairs, and yet came to honor and married the princess; and the children clapped their hands, and cried: "Tell us another! tell us another!" For they wanted Ivede Avede as well, but they only got the one about Humpty-Dumpty. The Christmas Tree stood quiet and pensive. The birds in the forest had never told a story such as that in which Humpty-Dumpty fell downstairs and yet married the princess.

"Well, that's is the way of the world," thought the Christmas Tree, and it quite believed that the story was

THE FIR TREE

true, because the man who told it seemed so very nice.

"Well, who knows," it thought; "perhaps I too shall fall downstairs and marry a princess." Meanwhile, it rejoiced to think that it would be decked out the same way next day, with candles, and toys, gold, and fruit. "To-morrow I will not tremble," it said to itself; "I will enjoy my grandeur. To-morrow I shall hear the story of Humpty-Dumpty again, and perhaps Ivede Avede as well"; and the Tree stood quiet and pensive throughout the whole night.

The next morning the man-servant and a maid came in. "Now the fun will start again," thought the Tree; but they dragged it out of the room, up the stairs, and into the attic; and there it was put away in a dark corner where no daylight could reach it.

"What does this mean?" thought the Tree; "what am I going to do here; what can I hear up here?" and it leaned against the wall, and thought, and thought. And plenty of time it had to think, for although days and nights went by, nobody came up to the attic, and when at last somebody came, it was only to put away some big boxes in the corner.

The Tree was now quite hidden, and it appeared to be quite forgotten. "Well, it is winter outdoors," it thought; "the earth is hard, and covered with snow, and the people cannot plant me now; I shall, therefore, have to stand here until the spring. How considerate that is! How kind people really are! If only it were not so dark here, and so fearfully lonely; there is not even a little hare. It was really nice out in the forest, when the ground was covered with snow, and the hare ran by. Yes, even when he jumped over me, although

THE FIR TREE

at the time I did not like it. Up here it is terribly lonely."

"Peep, peep," said a little Mouse, as it crept forth. Then came another, which sniffed at the Fir Tree and



slipped in amongst its branches. "It is awfully cold," said the little mouse, "or else it would be very nice in here. Don't you think so, old Fir Tree?"

"I am not at all old," said the Fir Tree; "there are many much older than I."

THE FIR TREE

"Where do you come from?" asked the Mouse, "and what do you know?" They were terribly inquisitive. "Now tell us about the most beautiful spot on earth—have you been there? Have you been into the pantry, where cheese is lying on the shelves, and the hams are hanging from the ceiling, where one dances on tallow-candles—where one goes in thin and comes out fat?"

"I don't know about that," said the Tree, "but I know the forest, where the sun shines and the birds sing," and then it told its whole history from youth upwards.

The little Mice had never heard of such things before, and they listened and said: "Oh! how many things you have seen! how happy you have been!"

"I?" said the Fir Tree, and it thought over what it had said. "Well, as a matter of fact, it *was* rather jolly at times." And then it told about the Christmas Eve, when it was dressed with cakes and candles.

"Ah!" said the little Mice, "you have indeed been happy, old Fir Tree."

"I am not at all old," said the Tree; "it was only this winter that I came from the forest. I am in the prime of life, and am only stunted in my growth."

"What nice tales he can tell!" said the little Mice.

And the next night four more little Mice came in to hear the Fir Tree's stories, and the more it told the better it remembered everything, and began to think they had been very jolly times! But they might come again, for did not Humpty-Dumpty fall downstairs and yet marry the princess?

"Perhaps," it said to itself, "I also may marry a princess;" and the Fir Tree thought of the pretty little Birch Tree that grew out in the forest, for the Birch was to the Fir Tree a real little princess.

THE FIR TREE

"Who is Humpty-Dumpty?" asked the little Mice. And the Tree told them the fairy tale from beginning to end. It remembered every single word, and the little Mice were ready to run up to the top of the Tree for pure joy. Next night a great many more Mice came in, and on Sunday two Rats; but in their opinion the story was not funny. The little Mice were very sorry for this, and they, too, began to think less of it.

"Do you know only that one story?" asked the Rats.

"Only that one," said the Tree. "It was the story I heard on my happiest, happiest evening; but I did not know then how happy I was."

"It is a very poor story. Don't you know anything about bacon or tallow candles—do you know no pantry stories?"

"No," said the Tree.

"Well, then, we don't want to hear you," said the Rats; so they went home.

At last the little Mice also went home, and the Tree sighed.

"It was very nice when those merry little Mice were sitting around me, listening to what I told them. Now that also is past, but I shall know how to amuse myself when I am taken out again."

But when did this happen? Well, one morning some people came and rummaged about in the garret; the boxes were moved, and the Tree was taken out; they threw it rather roughly on the floor, but soon a man dragged it down towards the staircase, where the daylight shone in. "Now life begins again," thought the Tree, as it felt the fresh air and the first sunbeam. Then it found itself out in the yard; but all this happened so quickly that the Tree altogether forgot to look

THE FIR TREE

at itself—there was so much to see all round it. The yard adjoined the garden, where everything was in bloom; roses, fresh and fragrant, hung over the little paling, the linden-trees were blooming, and the Swallows flew about and cried: “Tweet, tweet! my husband has come.” But it was not the Fir Tree that they meant.

“Now I am going to live,” cried the Fir Tree joyously, and it spread out its branches; but lo! they were all withered and yellow, and it lay in a corner amongst weeds and nettles. The tinsel star still stuck at the top of the Tree, glittering in the bright sunshine.

In the yard two merry children were playing. They had danced round the tree at Christmas-time, and greatly enjoyed themselves. The smaller of the two ran up and tore off the tinsel star. “Look what is still sticking to that ugly old Christmas Tree!” he said, and trod on the branches so that they cracked under his boots.

The Tree looked at all the beauty of the flowers and the freshness of the garden; then it looked at itself, and wished that it had been left in its dark corner in the garret. It thought of its fresh youth in the forest, of the merry Christmas Eve, and of the little Mice that were so glad to listen to the story of Humpty-Dumpty.

“All is over! all is over!” said the poor Tree; “if only I had enjoyed myself when I could have done so! But it is all over now!” And the man-servant came and chopped the Tree up into little pieces, until there was a whole bundle of it. It blazed brightly under the great copper, and it sighed deeply, every sigh sounding like a tiny pistol-shot. The children who were playing came in and sat down in front of the fire, looked into

THE FIR TREE

it, and cried: "Piff! paff!" but at each shot there was a deep sigh. It was the Tree, thinking of the summer day in the wood, of the winter night when the stars were shining, of the Christmas Eve, and of Humpty-Dumpty, and the only fairy tale it had ever heard, or could tell.

And so the Tree was burned to ashes. The children played in the yard, and the little one pinned on his breast the tinsel star which the Tree had worn on its happiest evening.

Now it was all over—the Tree was gone, and the story with it. And this is the way of all stories.



The Brave Tin Soldier

THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they were all born of the same old tin spoon. They carried their muskets on their shoulders and looked straight in front of them; their uniform was red and blue, and very pretty indeed. The very first words they heard in this world, when the lid was taken off the box, were the words, "Tin Soldiers!" for that is what a little boy cried, clapping his hands, as he saw them: they were given to him because it was his birthday, and he set them up on the table. All the soldiers were like each other except one, who was a little different; he had only one leg, for he was the last to be cast, and there was not enough tin, but he stood just as steadily on his one leg as the others on their two. And it was just this one who became famous.

On the table, where they were all set up, a number of other toys were standing, but what first met the eye was a beautiful castle made of cardboard. Through the small windows you could see straight into the rooms; little trees were standing outside, around a little piece of looking-glass that represented a lake. Swans of wax were swimming there, and were reflected in it. This was very pretty; but prettiest of all was a little maid who was standing at the open door of the castle; she also was cut out of cardboard, but she had a skirt

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

of the finest gauze, and a little narrow blue ribbon over the shoulders like a sash, in the middle of which was a little bit of glittering tinsel as large as her whole face. The little maiden stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and she lifted one of her legs so high that



the Tin Soldier could not see it at all, and thought that she had only one leg, like himself.

“That would be the wife for me,” he thought, “but she is too aristocratic, and lives in a castle. I have only a box, and that belongs to the whole twenty-five of us. That is no place for her; but I would like to

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

make her acquaintance all the same." So he laid himself down at full length behind a snuff-box where he could easily watch the charming little maid, who kept standing on one leg without losing her balance.

Towards evening all the other tin soldiers were put into the box, and the people in the house went to bed. Then the toys began to play: paid visits, went to war, and gave balls. The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they wanted to join in the fun, but they could not get the lid off. The nutcrackers were turning somersaults; the slate pencil was at work on the slate; and there was such a noise that the canary bird woke up and began to join in the chatter, but he spoke in verse. The only two who did not move from their places were the Tin Soldier and the little dancer. She was standing straight up on the tip of her toe, with both arms stretched out, and the Tin Soldier stood just as firmly on his one leg, and did not take his eyes off her, even for a moment.

The clock struck twelve, when bang! off went the lid of the snuff-box. There was no snuff in it, but only a tiny black goblin, and a clever toy it was. "Tin Soldier," said the goblin, "please keep your eyes to yourself," but the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear. "Well, wait till to-morrow," said the goblin.

When the children came down in the morning, the Tin Soldier was put in the window, and whether it was the goblin or the draught that did it, all of a sudden the window flew up and the soldier fell head over heels from the third story. He came down at a terrible rate, and then he stuck upon his helmet, with his only leg straight up in the air, and his bayonet between the paving-stones. The servant and the little boy at once

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

went down to find him, but they could not see him, although they nearly trod on him.

If only the little Tin Soldier had cried, "Here I am," they might perhaps have found him, but he did not think it proper to call out loudly when he was in uniform.

Then it began to rain; the drops fell thicker and thicker, until it became a real downpour. When it was over two street boys came along. "Just look," said one, "here's a Tin Soldier; let us send him for a sail." So they made a little boat out of a newspaper, put the Tin Soldier in the middle, and there he was, sailing down the gutter. Both the boys ran alongside and clapped their hands. Goodness me! what large waves there were in that gutter, and how strong the current was!—but then it had been a real downpour.

The paper boat was tossed up and down, and now and then it turned round and round, until the Tin Soldier was quite dizzy, but he was brave and didn't move a muscle; he just looked straight in front of him and shouldered his musket. All at once the boat drifted into a long drain-pipe, where it was just as dark as if he had been in his box. "Where am I going now?" he thought. "Yes, it must be the goblin's fault. Now, if only the little lady were here in the boat, I would not mind if it were twice as dark." Suddenly they came upon a big water-rat, who lived in the drain-pipe. "Have you a passport?" said the rat. "Let me have it." The Tin Soldier said not a word, and held his musket tighter than ever. Away went the boat, and the rat after it. Ugh! how he gnashed his teeth and called out to the straws and chips: "Stop him, stop him! he hasn't paid the toll, and hasn't shown his passport!" But the cur-

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

rent grew stronger and stronger, and the Tin Soldier could now see daylight shining in at the end of the pipe. He also heard a roaring sound, which really might have frightened the boldest, for just where the gutter ended, the water poured out into a large canal, and this was just as dangerous for him as it would be for us to be carried over a great waterfall.

He was now so near it that he could not stop, so the boat swept out into the canal. The poor Tin Soldier stiffened himself as well as he could, and no one could say that he even moved an eyelid. The boat whirled round three or four times, filled with water to the very edge, and began to sink. The Tin Soldier stood up to the neck in water, and the boat sank deeper and deeper, the paper loosened more and more, until the water went over the Soldier's head. He thought of the charming little dancer, whom he would never see again, and in his ears sounded the words of the song:—

“Oh, warrior bold, good-bye!
Thy end, alas! is nigh.”

Then the paper burst, the Tin Soldier fell through, and was at once gobbled up by a big fish. Oh! how dark it was in there, even worse than in the drain-pipe, and there was so little room, but the Tin Soldier was brave, and lay at full length with his musket on his shoulder. The fish darted about in the most alarming way; then it lay quite still; but suddenly there was a flash like lightning; the daylight again appeared, and some one cried, “Tin Soldier!” The fish had been caught, taken to the market, sold, and brought to the kitchen, where the cook cut it up with a big knife.



THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

She took the Soldier by the waist with her two fingers and marched him into the sitting-room, where they all wanted to see such a remarkable man who had been traveling about in the inside of a fish. The Tin Soldier wasn't at all proud. They stood him up on the table, and there!—what curious things do happen in the world!—the Tin Soldier was in the very same



room in which he had been before! He saw the same children, and the same toys were standing on the table, the pretty castle and the lovely little dancer, and she was still standing on one leg whilst the other was high up in the air. She also was brave; this touched the Tin Soldier, and he was almost ready to weep tin tears, but of course that would not have been at all proper. He looked at her, and she looked at him; but they said

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

nothing. Then one of the little boys took the Soldier and threw him into the fireplace; he did not give any reason for doing this; it must have been the fault of the goblin in the snuff-box. The Tin Soldier was quite lit up, and felt a great heat, but whether from the fire or from love he did not know.

The colors were clean gone; whether this had happened from his travels or from grief no one could tell. He looked at the little maiden and she looked at him; he felt that he was melting, but he stood there bravely and shouldered his musket. Suddenly the door flew open, the draught took hold of the dancer, and she flew like a sylph straight into the fireplace to the Tin Soldier, blazed up into a flame, and was gone. The Tin Soldier melted into a lump, and when the servant-maid took out the ashes next day she found him transformed into a little tin heart. Of the dancer nothing was left but the little bit of tinsel, which was burnt as black as a cinder.

The Storks

IN the last house in a little village stood a stork's nest. Mother Stork sat in it with her four young ones, who stretched out their heads with the sharp black bills, for these had not yet turned red. A little way off stood Father Stork, erect and stately on the ridge of the roof. He had drawn up one of his legs under him, so as to feel a little uncomfortable while he stood sentry. One might have fancied that he was carved out of wood, so still did he stand.

"It must appear very aristocratic," he thought, "for my wife to have a sentry standing by her nest. They can't know that it is her husband. They must think I have been ordered to stand here; how grand it looks!" So he continued to stand on one leg.

In the street below quite a number of children were playing, and when they caught sight of the storks, one of the boldest of the boys, and afterwards all of them, sang an old rhyme about storks. But they only sang it just as they could remember it:—

"Stork, stork, fly away!
Why stand on one leg all day?
Your wife is in her cozy nest,
Where her four small children rest.

They'll hang one bird,
And fry another,
And shoot the third,
'And cook his brother."

THE STORKS

"Just listen to what those boys are saying!" said the little Stork children. "They say we are to be hanged and fried."

"Never mind about that!" said Mother Stork. "If you don't listen you won't hear anything."

But the boys went on singing, and pointing at the Storks; only one boy, whose name was Peter, said that it was a shame to tease the birds, and he would have nothing to do with it.

Mother Stork comforted her little ones.

"Never mind," said she; "see how quietly your father stands, although he is only on one leg."

"We are so frightened!" said the young Storks, and they drew their heads far into the nest.

The next day, when the children came out again to play, and saw the Storks, they sang their song:—

"They'll hang one bird,
And fry another."

"Are we really to be hanged and eaten?" asked the young Storks.

"No, indeed!" said the mother. "You must learn to fly; I will teach you; then we will go out into the meadows and pay a visit to the frogs. They will bow to us in the water, and sing 'Co—ax! co—ax!' and then we shall eat them up. That will be very enjoyable."

"And what then?" asked the young Storks.

"Then all the storks in the country will meet together, and begin the autumn maneuvers. By that time you must be able to fly well; that is a very important matter, for every stork who is unable to fly properly is killed by the general with his beak. You must there-

THE STORKS

fore be careful, and pay great attention when the drilling begins."

"Then we shall be killed after all, just as the boys say? Only listen—now they are saying it again."

"Listen to me, and not to them," said Mother Stork. "After the great maneuvers we shall fly to the warm countries, far away from here, over mountains and forests. We shall fly to Egypt, where there are three-cornered houses of stone which slope up to a point far above the clouds; they call them Pyramids, and they are older than any stork can imagine. There is a river which overflows its banks, and all the land is turned to mud. One walks about in the mud, and eats frogs."

"Oh!" cried all the young ones.

"Yes, it is a delightful place. We do nothing there all day long but eat; and while we are so comfortable over there, in this country not a green leaf is on the trees: it is so cold that the clouds freeze to pieces, and fall down in little white fragments!"

It was the snow that she meant, but this was the best explanation she could give.

"And do the naughty boys also freeze to pieces?" asked the young Storks.

"No, they do not freeze to pieces, but they are not very far from it, and have to sit cowering in their dark rooms; whereas you are able to fly about in those foreign lands, where there are flowers and warm sunshine."

After some time the youngsters grew so big that they could stand upright in the nest and look far around. Father Stork came every day with delicious frogs, little snakes, and all the other stork dainties that he could find. Oh! what fun it was when he performed his

THE STORKS

tricks before them! He would lay his head quite back upon his tail, and make a noise with his beak, as if it were a rattle; and then he told them stories, all about the marshes.

"Now listen! it is time that you learned to fly," said Mother Stork one day; and so all the four little Storks had to get out on the ridge of the roof. Oh, how they tottered! how they balanced themselves with their wings!—and yet they were near falling.

"Now, just look at me!" said the Mother. "You must hold your heads like this! you must place your feet like this! One! two! one, two! That is what will help you on in the world."

Then she flew a little way, and the young ones made a little clumsy leap. Bump! there they lay, for their bodies were too heavy.

"I don't want to fly!" said one of the little Storks, and he crept back into the nest; "I don't care to go to the warm countries."

"Then do you want to be frozen to death when the winter comes? Are the boys to come and hang you? Now, I will just call them!"

"Oh! no," cried the little Stork, and he hopped out on to the roof again like the rest.

On the third day they could actually fly a little; so they thought they could rest on their wings in the air. But when they tried this—bump!—down they tumbled, and they had to flap their wings again. Now the boys came down the street, and sang their song:—

"Stork, stork, fly away!"

"Shall we fly down and peck out their eyes?" asked the young Storks.

THE STORKS

"No; leave them alone," replied the mother; "only listen to me, that is far more important. One, two, three!—now we fly round to the right. One, two, three!—now round to the left of the chimney! Yes, that was very good; the last flap with the wings was so neat and correct that I will give you permission to go to the marsh with me to-morrow! Several good Stork families go there with their youngsters. Let them see that you are the nicest, and that you can walk upright, for it looks well, and causes you to be respected."

"But shall we not be revenged on those rude boys?" asked the young Storks.

"Let them scream as much as they like. You will fly up to the clouds, and go to the land of the Pyramids, when they will be left to shiver, and will not even have a green leaf or a sweet apple."

"Yes, we will revenge ourselves!" they whispered to one another; and so they again began practicing.

Of all the boys down in the street, the one who most enjoyed singing the teasing song was he who had started it, and he was quite a little boy. He could hardly be more than six years old. The young Storks thought he was quite a hundred, for he was much bigger than their father and mother; and how should they know how old children and grown up people were? They would be revenged at least upon this little boy, for it was he who had begun, and he always kept on. The young Storks were very angry; and as they grew bigger they were less inclined to bear it. At last their mother had to promise them that they should be revenged, but not until the day of their leaving the country.

THE STORKS

"We must first see how you behave yourselves at the grand maneuvers. If you get through them badly, so that the general stabs you to the heart with his beak, the boys will be right—at least, in one way. Now let us see."

"Yes, you shall see," cried the young Storks; and then they took great pains. They practiced every day, and flew so swiftly and gracefully, that it was a pleasure to see them.

Now the autumn came on; all the Storks began to flock together, to fly away to countries where it is warm, while we have the winter here. Then came the maneuvers. They had to go over forests and villages, only to see how well they could fly, for it was a long journey that they had before them. The young Storks did so well that they got "Remarkably good, with frogs and snakes." That was the highest mark; and they were allowed to eat the frogs and snakes—so that is what they did.

"Now we will have our revenge!" they said.

"Yes, certainly!" said Mother Stork. "I have thought of the best plan. I know the pond in which all the tiny little human children lie till the Stork comes and brings them to their parents. The pretty little babies lie there sleeping, dreaming more sweetly than they will ever dream afterwards. All parents are glad to have such a baby, and all children want a little sister or brother. Now we will fly to the pond, and fetch one for each of the children who has not sung the naughty song and made fun of the Storks."

"But he who started singing—that naughty, ugly boy!" screamed the young Storks; "what shall we do to him?"

THE STORKS

“There is a little dead baby in the pond, that has dreamed itself to death; we will bring that for him. Then he will cry, because we have brought him a little dead brother. But to that good boy—you have not forgotten him—the one who said: ‘It is wrong to tease the birds!’—to him we will bring a brother *and* a sister. And as his name is Peter, all of you shall be called Peter, too.”

And it happened as she said; all the Storks were called Peter, and that is their name to this day.





The Emperor's New Clothes

MANY years ago there lived an Emperor who was so exceedingly fond of fine new clothes that he spent all his money on rich dresses. He did not care for his soldiers, nor for the theater, nor for driving about, except for the purpose of showing his new clothes.

He had a dress for every hour of the day, and just

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

as they say of a king, "He is in Council," they always said of him, "The Emperor is in his Wardrobe."

Well, the great town in which he lived was very busy. Every day a number of strangers arrived.

One day two rogues came along, saying they were weavers, and that they knew how to weave the finest stuff one could imagine. Not only, said they, were the colors and designs exceedingly beautiful, but the clothes that were made of their material had the wonderful quality of being invisible to everybody who was either unfit for his position, or was extraordinarily stupid.

"They must be splendid clothes," thought the Emperor; "by wearing them I could easily discover what persons in my kingdom are unfit for their posts. I could distinguish the wise from the stupid. I must have that stuff woven for me at once!" So he gave the two rogues a large sum of money, in order that they might begin their work without delay.

The rogues put up two looms, and pretended to be working, but they had nothing at all in the frames. Again and again they demanded the finest silks and the most magnificent gold thread, but they put it all in their own pockets, and worked at their empty looms late into the night.

"Now, I should like to know how far they have got on with that stuff," thought the Emperor; but he felt quite uncomfortable when he remembered that those who were stupid or unfit for their positions could not see it. He did not think for a moment that he had anything to fear for himself; but nevertheless, he would rather send somebody else first to see how the stuff was getting on.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Everybody in the town knew what a remarkable quality the stuff possessed, and each was anxious to see how bad or how stupid his neighbors were.

"I will send my honest old minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor; "he can judge best how the stuff looks, for he is intelligent, and no one is better fit for his office than he."

So the clever old minister went out into the hall, where the two rogues were sitting at work on their empty looms.

"Goodness me!" he thought, and opened his eyes wide; "I cannot see anything," but he did not say so. Both of the rogues begged him to be so kind as to step nearer, and asked him was it not a pretty design, and were not the colors beautiful, and they pointed to the empty looms.

But the poor old minister kept on opening his eyes wider and wider; he could not see anything, for there was nothing there.

"Goodness me!" he thought; "am I really stupid? I never thought so, and nobody must know it. Am I really unfit for my office? No; I must certainly not tell anybody that I cannot see the stuff."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the one who was weaving.

"Oh, it is beautiful! most magnificent!" replied the old minister, and looked through his spectacles. "What a pattern! and what colors! Yes, I must tell the Emperor that I like it very much indeed."

"Ah! we are very glad of that," said both weavers, and then they described the colors, and explained the strange patterns.

The old minister listened attentively, so as to be able

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

to repeat it all when he returned to the Emperor, and this he did.

The rogues now asked for more money, and for more silk and gold thread, which they required for weaving. They put everything into their pockets, and not a thread went on the frames, but nevertheless they continued to work at the empty looms.

Soon afterwards the Emperor sent another clever statesman to see how the weaving was getting on, and whether the stuff was nearly ready. The same thing happened to him as to the minister; he looked and looked, but as there was nothing on the empty frames, he could not see anything.

"Now, is not that a beautiful piece of stuff?" said both rogues, and described the beauty of the pattern, which did not exist at all.

"I am not stupid," thought the statesman, "so it must be that I am unfit for the high position I hold; that is very strange, but I must not let anybody notice it." So he praised the piece of stuff which he could not see, and said how pleased he was with the beautiful colors and the pretty pattern.

"Oh! it is really magnificent!" he said to the Emperor.

"All the people in the town were talking about the beautiful stuff, and the Emperor himself wished to see it while it was still on the loom. With a whole suite of chosen courtiers, among whom were the two honest old statesmen who had been there before, the Emperor went to the two cunning rogues, who were now weaving as fast as they could, but without thread or shuttle.

"Well! is it not magnificent?" cried the two clever statesmen; "does your majesty recognize how beautiful

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

is the pattern, how charming the colors?" and they pointed to the empty looms, for they thought that the others could see the stuff.

"What?" thought the Emperor; "I cannot see anything; this is terrible! Am I stupid; or am I not fit to be Emperor? This would be the most dreadful



thing that could happen to me! Yes, it is very beautiful," he said at last; "we give our highest approbation"; and he nodded as if he were quite satisfied, and gazed at the empty looms.

He would not say that he saw nothing, and the whole of his suite looked and looked; but, like the others, they were unable to see anything. So they said, just like

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

the Emperor, "Yes, it is very pretty," and they advised him to have some clothes made from this magnificent stuff, and to wear them for the first time at the great procession that was about to take place. "It is magnificent! beautiful! excellent!" they said one to another, and they were all so exceedingly pleased with it that the Emperor gave the two rogues a decoration to be worn in the button-hole, and the title "Imperial Weavers."



The rogues worked throughout the whole of the night preceding the day of the procession, and had over sixteen candles alight, so that people should see how busy they were in preparing the Emperor's new clothes.

They pretended to take the stuff off the looms, cut it in the air with great scissors, and sewed with needles without thread, and at last they said—

"See! now the clothes are ready!"

The Emperor, followed by his most distinguished courtiers, came in person, and the rogues lifted their

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

arms up in the air, just as if they held something, and said, "See! here are the trousers, here is the coat, here is the cloak," and so forth. "It is all as light as a cobweb; one might imagine one had nothing on, but that is just the beauty of it!"

"Yes," said all the courtiers: but they could not see anything, because there was nothing.

"Will your imperial highness condescend to undress?" said the rogues; "we will then attire your majesty in the new clothes, here, in front of the mirror."

"Oh! how well they look! how beautifully they fit!" said every one; "what a pattern! what colors! It is indeed a magnificent dress."

"They are standing outside with the canopy which is to be carried over your majesty in the procession," announced the Master of the Ceremonies.

"Well, I am ready," said the Emperor. "Does it not fit me well!" and he turned again to the mirror, for he wanted it to appear that he was admiring his rich costume.

The chamberlains who were to carry the train fumbled with their hands on the floor just as if they were holding the train up; they raised their hands in the air, but dared not let anybody notice that they saw nothing; and so the Emperor went in procession beneath the magnificent canopy, and all the people in the street and at the windows said: "Oh! how beautiful the Emperor's new clothes are; what a splendid train, and how well everything fits!"

No one would admit that he could see nothing, for that would have shown that he was either unfit for his post or very stupid. None of the Emperor's dresses had ever been so much admired.



THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

"But he has nothing on at all!" said a little child.

"Just hear the voice of the innocent," said his father, and one whispered to the other what the child had said. "'He has nothing on,' says a little child: 'he has nothing on!'"

"But he has nothing on," cried the whole of the people at last; and the Emperor shivered, for it seemed to him that they were right.

But he thought to himself, "I must go through with the procession," and he walked with even greater dignity than before; and the chamberlains followed, carrying the train which did not exist at all.

The Farmyard Cock and the Weather-Cock

THERE were two Cocks—one on the dunghill, the other on the roof. Both were conceited; but which of the two was of more use?

Tell us your opinion; we shall keep our own all the same.

The poultry-yard was divided by a fence from another yard, in which lay a dunghill, and on this grew a great Cucumber, which was fully conscious of being a forcing-bed plant.

“That is a privilege of birth,” the Cucumber said to herself; “everybody cannot be born a cucumber; there must be other beings as well. The fowls, the ducks, and all the inhabitants of the neighboring yard are creatures too. I look up to the Yard Cock on the fence. He is certainly of much greater importance than the Weather-Cock, who, it is true, is highly placed, but who cannot even creak, much less crow; has neither hens nor chickens, thinks only of himself, and perspires verdigris. But the Yard Cock—he is something like a cock! His walk is like a dance, his crowing is music, and wherever he goes he makes himself heard. What a trumpeter he is! If he came in here, and were to eat me up, leaf, stalk, and all, it would be quite a blissful death,” said the Cucumber.

THE FARMYARD COCK AND THE WEATHER-COCK

When night came, the weather was very bad. Hens, chickens, and even the Farmyard Cock himself, were driven to shelter. The wind blew down the fence between the two yards with a fearful crash, the tiles came tumbling down, but the Weather-Cock stood fast. He did not even turn round; in fact, he could not, although he was young and newly cast—he was firm and steady. He had been “born old,” and was not at all like the birds that fly beneath the sky, such as the sparrows and the swallows. These he despised, considering them piping birds of insignificant size—just ordinary songbirds.

“As for the pigeons,” said the Weather-Cock, “they are large and brilliant, and gleam like mother-of-pearl—in fact, they looked like a kind of weather-cock; but they are fat and stupid, and think of nothing but stuffing themselves with food. Besides,” he said, “they are tiresome company.”

The birds of passage had also paid him a visit, and told him about foreign countries, about caravans of the air, and exciting robber stories, containing encounters with birds of prey. It was all very interesting at first, but the Weather-Cock found that they always repeated themselves; their stories were constantly the same, and that was tedious.

“They are tedious, and everything is tedious,” he said. “No one is fit to associate with. The world is no good; it is all nonsense.”

The Weather-Cock was what is called “tired of the world,” and that quality would certainly have made him interesting in the eyes of the Cucumber if she had known it. But she had only eyes for the Yard Cock, who now came into her own yard.

THE FARMYARD COCK AND THE WEATHER-COCK

The wind had blown down the fence, but the thunder and lightning were over.

"What do you think of *that* crowing?" the Yard Cock asked of his hens and chickens.

"It is a little rough, a little wanting in elegance."

The hens and chickens stepped out on the muck-heap, and the Cock strutted after them like a knight.

"Garden plant!" he said to the Cucumber; and by this one remark she recognized his immense education, and forgot that he was pecking at her and eating her up. Blissful death!

And the hens came, and the chickens came, and when one of them runs, all the rest run; and they clucked and chirped, and looked at the Cock, and were proud that he was one of their family.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" he crowed. "If I crow like that in the great poultry-yard of the world, the chickens will at once become big fowls."

And the hens and the chickens clucked and chirped, and the Cock told them a great piece of news:—

"A Cock can lay an egg; and what do you think is in that egg? In that egg lies a basilisk. No one can endure the sight of it. Men know this, and now you know it too—you know what is in me, and what a Cock-of-All-the-Poultry-Yards I am!"

And the Yard Cock flapped his wings, made his comb swell up, and crowed again; and all the fowls shuddered, and so did the little chickens; but they were very proud indeed that one of their family should be a Cock-of-All-the-Poultry-Yards. They clucked and chirped, so that the Weather-Cock should hear it; and he heard it, but he did not move.

"It's all stupid nonsense," said the Weather-Cock.

THE FARMYARD COCK AND THE WEATHER-COCK

"The Yard Cock could never lay an egg, and I am too lazy to lay one. If I cared to, I might lay a wind-egg, but the world is not worth a wind-egg. And now I don't even care to sit here any longer."

And so the Weather-Cock broke off. But he did not kill the Yard Cock, although this, said the hens, was his intention.

And what is the moral?—"It is better to crow than to be tired of the world, and break off."



The Tinder-Box

THERE came a soldier marching along the high-road—one, two! one, two! He had a knapsack on his back, and a sword by his side, for he had been in the wars, and now he was going home. On the way he met with an old witch; she was very hideous: and her underlip hung down upon her breast. She said: "Good evening, soldier. What a fine sword you have, and what a big knapsack! You are a real soldier! You shall have as much money as you wish."

"Thank you, old witch," said the soldier.

"Do you see that big tree?" asked the witch, pointing to a tree that stood close by them. "It is quite hollow inside. You must climb to the top, and then you will see a hole, through which you can let yourself slide, so as to get deep down into the tree. I will tie a rope round your waist, so that I can pull you up again when you call out to me."

"What am I to do down in the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Fetch some money!" replied the witch. "When you get to the bottom of the tree you will see a large cave; it is quite light, for over a hundred lamps are burning there. Then you will see three doors; these you can open, for the keys are in the key-holes. If you go into the first chamber, you will see a great chest in

THE TINDER-BOX

the middle of the floor; on this chest sits a dog, with eyes as big as a pair of tea-cups. But you need not care about that. I will give you my blue-checked apron, and you can spread it out upon the floor; then go up quickly and take the dog, and set him on my apron, open the chest, and take as many pence as you like. They are all copper. If you prefer silver, you must go into the second chamber; there sits a dog with a pair of eyes as big as mill-wheels. But you need not care about that. Set him upon my apron, and take some of the money. If you want gold, you can have that too—as much as you can carry—by going into the third chamber. But the dog that sits on the money-chest there has two eyes as big as the Round Tower.* He is a fierce dog, to be sure; but you need not care about that. Only set him on my apron, and he won't hurt you; then take out of the chest as much gold as you like."

"That's not so bad," said the soldier. "But what am I to give you, old witch, for you will want something, too, I suppose?"

"No," replied the witch, "not a single shilling. You need only bring me an old Tinder-box which my grandmother forgot when she was down there last."

"Well, then, let me get the rope round my waist," said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my blue-checked apron."

And the soldier climbed up into the tree, let himself fall bump! down through the hole, and stood, as the witch had said, in the great cave, where over a hundred lamps were burning.

* The Round Tower is a well-known tower in Copenhagen.

THE TINDER-BOX

Now he opened the first door. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as big as tea-cups, staring at him.

"You're a fine fellow!" exclaimed the soldier; and he set him on the witch's apron, and took as many coppers as his pockets would hold; locked the chest, put the dog back on it again, and went into the second chamber. Aha! there sat the dog with the eyes as big as mill-wheels.

"You should not stare so hard at me," said the soldier; "you might hurt your eyes." And he set the dog upon the witch's apron. And when he saw the many silver coins in the chest, he threw away all the coppers he had, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with silver.

Then he went into the third chamber. Oh, that was terrible! The dog in there really had two eyes as big as the Round Tower, and they turned round and round in his head like wheels.

"Good evening!" said the soldier, and touched his cap, for he had never seen such a dog before. When he looked at him a little more closely, he thought, "That will do," lifted him down on the floor, and opened the chest. Good gracious! what a mass of gold! There was enough to buy the whole of Copenhagen, and all the cake-women's sugar pigs, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the whole world. What a quantity of money there was, to be sure! Now the soldier threw away all the silver coins with which he had filled his pockets and his knapsack, and took gold instead. He filled all his pockets, his knapsack, his boots, and his cap, so that he could scarcely walk. Now indeed he had plenty of money. He put the dog

THE TINDER-BOX

on the chest, slammed the door, and called out through the tree: "Now pull me up, old witch."

"Have you the Tinder-box?" asked the witch.

"There," exclaimed the soldier, "I have clean forgotten it."

And he went and fetched it.

The witch pulled him up, and he stood on the high-road again, with pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of golden coins.

"What are you going to do with the Tinder-box?" he asked.

"That has nothing to do with you," replied the witch. "You have your money—now give me the Tinder-box."

"Nonsense!" said the soldier. "Tell me at once what you are going to do with it, or I will draw my sword and cut off your head!"

"No!" cried the witch.

So the soldier cut off her head. There she lay! And he tied up all his money in her apron, lifted it on to his back like a bundle, put the Tinder-box in his pocket, and went straight off to the town.

It was a splendid town! He put up at the very best inn, asked for the finest rooms, and ordered dishes that he liked, for he was now rich, and had plenty of money. The servant who had to clean his boots certainly thought them a remarkably old pair for such a rich gentleman; but he had not bought any new ones yet. The next day he ordered proper boots and handsome clothes. Now the soldier had become a fine gentleman. The people told him of all the splendor in their city, and about the King, and what a beautiful Princess the King's daughter was.

"Where is she to be seen?" asked the soldier.

THE TINDER-BOX

"She is not to be seen at all," they all said; "she lives in a great copper castle, surrounded by many walls and towers. No one but the King may visit the castle, for it has been prophesied that she will marry a common soldier, and the King will not hear of this."

"I should like to see her," thought the soldier, but he was unable to get permission.

He now lived merrily, went to the theater, drove in the King's garden, and gave large sums of money to the poor. This was very kind of him; but he knew from old times how hard it was to be penniless. Now he was rich, had fine clothes, and made many friends, who all said he was a good fellow and a true gentleman; and this pleased him. But as he spent money every day and never earned any, he had at last only twopence left; and he was obliged to move away from the fine rooms in which he had dwelt, and live in a little garret just under the roof, where he had to clean his boots himself, and mend them with a darning-needle. None of his friends came to see him, for there were too many stairs to climb.

One evening it was quite dark, and he could not even buy himself a candle; but it occurred to him that there was a candle-stump in the Tinder-box which he had taken from the hollow tree into which the witch had helped him. He brought out the Tinder-box and the bit of candle; but as soon as he struck a light and the sparks flew from the flint, the door sprang open, and the dog with eyes as big as a pair of tea-cups, which he had seen in the tree, stood before him, and said—

"What does my lord order?"

"What?" exclaimed the soldier. "This is a famous Tinder-box indeed, if it can get me anything I want!

THE TINDER-BOX

Bring me some money!" said he to the dog; and whisk! the dog was gone, and whisk! he was back again, with a big bag full of coppers in his mouth.



Now the soldier knew what a splendid Tinder-box it was. If he struck it once, in came the dog who sat upon the chest of copper money; if he struck it twice, in came the dog who had the silver coins; and if he

THE TINDER-BOX

struck it three times, in came the dog who had the gold.

So the soldier moved back into the fine rooms, appeared in handsome clothes, and all his friends knew him again, and liked him very much indeed.

Then thought he to himself: "It is absurd that one cannot manage to see the Princess. They all say she is so beautiful; but what is the use of that, if she has always to sit in the great copper castle with the many towers?" Is there no way I can get to see her? Ah—where is my Tinder-box?" So he struck a light, and whisk! came the dog with eyes as big as tea-cups.

"It is midnight, certainly," said the soldier, "but I should very much like to see the Princess, if only for a moment."

The dog was outside the door at once, and, before the soldier had time to think, he was back again with the Princess. She lay asleep on the dog's back, and was so beautiful that everyone could see that she was a real Princess. The soldier could not help it: he was obliged to kiss her, for he was a real soldier. Then the dog ran back with the Princess.

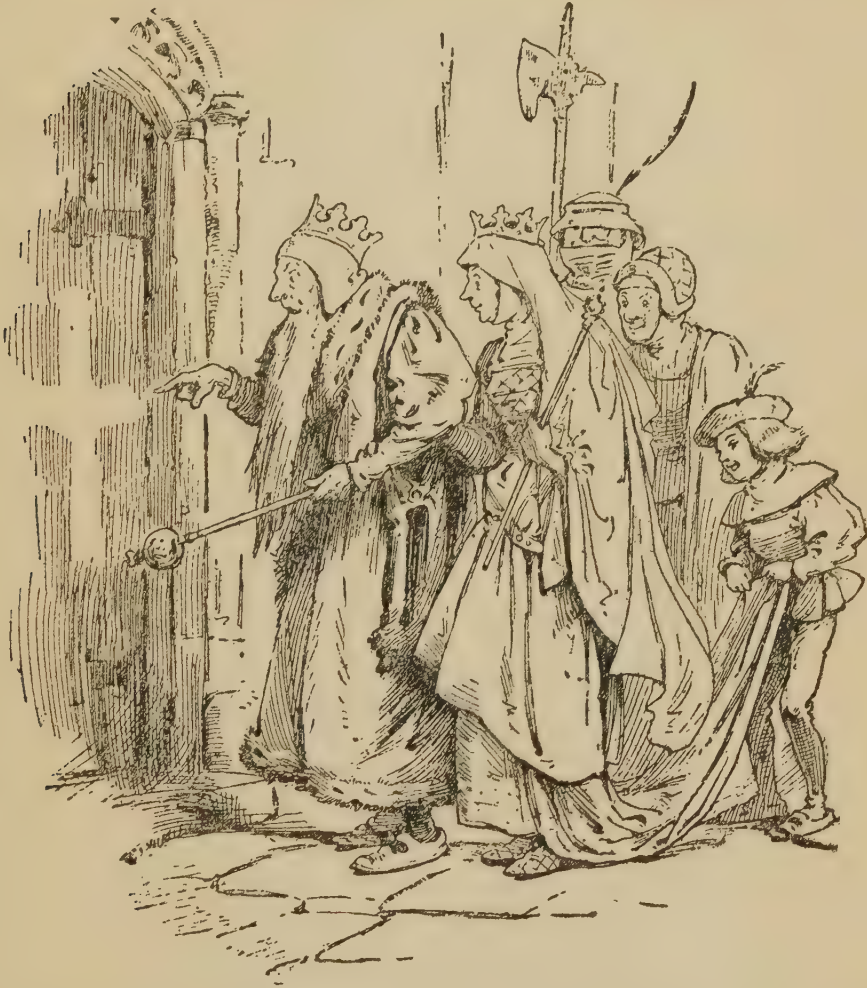
But when the morning came, and the King and Queen were at breakfast, the Princess said she had dreamed a wonderful dream during the night. It was about a dog and a soldier. She had ridden upon the dog, and the soldier had kissed her.

"Well, that is a fine story," said the Queen. And one of the old maids-of-honor was set to watch the next night by the Princess's bed, to discover whether this was really a dream, or what else it might be.

The soldier had a great longing to see the lovely Princess again; so the dog came in the night, took her away, and ran as fast as he could. But the old maid-

THE TINDER-BOX

of-honor put on water-boots, and ran just as fast after him. When she saw that they disappeared into a great



house, she thought, "Now I know where it is," and with a bit of chalk she drew a big cross on the door.

Then she went home and went to bed, and the dog

THE TINDER-BOX

ran back with the Princess; but when he saw that there was a cross drawn on the door where the soldier lived, he took a piece of chalk too, and drew crosses on all the doors in the town. That was cleverly done, for



now the maid-of-honor could not find the right door, as there were crosses on all of them.

In the early morning the King and the Queen came with the old maid-of-honor and all the officers of the Court, to see where the Princess had been.

THE TINDER-BOX

"Here it is!" said the King, when he saw the first door with a cross upon it.

"No, my dear husband, it is here!" said the Queen, who saw another door with a cross on it.

"But there is one, and there is another!" they all cried, for wherever they looked there were crosses on the doors. So they saw at once that it would be useless to continue the search.

But the Queen was a very clever woman, who could do more than drive in a carriage. She took her great gold scissors, cut up a big piece of silk, and made a neat little bag; this she filled with fine buckwheat grain, and tied it on the Princess's back; and when that was done, she cut a little hole in the bag, so that the grain would be scattered wherever the Princess went.

In the night the dog went again to the castle, took the Princess on its back, and ran with her to the soldier, who loved her very much, and who wished he was a prince, so that he could make her his wife. The dog did not notice how the grain was scattered the whole way from the castle to the soldier's window, where he ran up the wall with the Princess.

In the morning the King and the Queen easily discovered where their daughter had been, and they took the soldier and put him in prison.

There he sat. Ugh! How dark and miserable it was! And they said to him, "To-morrow you shall be hanged!" That was not a pleasant thing to hear, for he had left his Tinder-box at the inn. In the morning he saw, through the iron grating of the little window, how the people were running out of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums, and saw the soldiers marching. All the people were running out, and there

THE TINDER-BOX

was a shoemaker's boy with leathern apron and slippers, who ran so fast that one of his slippers flew off, and came right against the wall where the soldier sat peeping out through the iron grating.

"Hallo, you shoemaker's boy! you needn't be in such a hurry," cried the soldier to him; "it will not begin till I come. If you will run over to where I live, and bring me my Tinder-box, you shall have fourpence, but you must put your best leg foremost."

The shoemaker's boy wished to earn the fourpence, so he hurried away to fetch the Tinder-box, and gave it to the soldier—and now we shall hear what happened.

Outside the town a large scaffold had been erected, and round it stood the soldiers and many hundreds of thousands of people. The King and Queen sat on a splendid throne opposite the judges and the whole Council.

The soldier was standing on the ladder; but as they were about to put the rope round his neck, he said it was usual to grant an innocent request before a poor criminal suffered punishment. He would so very much like to smoke a pipe of tobacco, for it would be the last pipe he would smoke in this world!

This the King could not refuse, so the soldier took his Tinder-box, and struck fire. One—two—three! and suddenly there stood all the dogs—the one with eyes as big as tea-cups, the one with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the one whose eyes were as big as the Round Tower.

"Help me now, so that I may not be hanged!" said the soldier.

And the dogs fell upon all the judges and the whole of the Council, seized one by the legs, and another by

THE TINDER-BOX

the nose, and tossed them all yards into the air, so that they fell down, and were dashed to pieces.

"I won't!" cried the King; but the biggest dog took both him and the Queen, and threw them after the others. Then the soldiers were frightened, and all the people cried, "Little soldier, you shall be our King, and marry the beautiful Princess!"

So they put the soldier into the King's coach, and all the three dogs danced in front, and cried, "Hurrah!" and the boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The Princess came out from the copper castle, and became Queen, and this pleased her very well.

The wedding festivities lasted eight days, and the dogs sat at the table too, with their eyes wide open.



“It Is Quite True”

IT is a terrible business!” said a hen, and she said it in a part of the town where the affair had not happened. “It is a terrible business in the poultry-house! I could not sleep alone to-night; it is a good thing that there are a number of us here on the roost.” And she told a tale, which made the feathers of the hens stand on end, and the cock’s comb fall quite flat. It is quite true!

But we will start with the beginning, which happened in a poultry-house in another part of the town. The sun went down, and the hens flew up to roost. One of the hens had white feathers and short legs, and she laid the right number of eggs; she was a respectable hen in every way. When she came up on the roost, she pecked herself with her beak, and a little feather fell out.

“There it goes!” she said; “the more I peck myself the prettier I become.” And she said this in a joking way, for she was a wit among the fowls, though, as I have said before, very respectable; and then she fell asleep.

It was dark all around; one hen sat beside another, but the one who sat nearest to the hen who made the joke did not sleep; she listened, though she pretended to hear nothing, just as everyone in this world should do who wishes to live in quiet. But she couldn’t help telling it to her next neighbor.

“IT IS QUITE TRUE”

“Did you hear what was said? I don’t mention any names, but there is one hen who wants to peck out her feathers so as to look more beautiful. If I were a cock I should despise her.”

And just above the fowls sat an owl, with her owl-husband and her owl-children, and they have sharp ears in that family. So they heard every word their neigh-



bors had said, and they rolled their eyes, and the Mother Owl clapped her wings and said—

“Don’t listen to it, but I suppose you heard what was said. I heard it with my own ears, and they will stand a deal of hearing before they fall off. There is one of the hens who has so completely forgotten what is becoming for a hen, that she sits and pecks all her feathers off, and lets the cock see her.”

"IT IS QUITE TRUE"

"Prenez-garde aux enfants," said Father Owl; "that is not fit for the children to hear."

"But I must tell it to the neighbor owl," said Mother Owl; "she is such a respectable owl to associate with," and so she flew away.

"Hoo! hoo! too-who!" they both screeched down to the doves in the neighbor's dovecot, "have you heard it, have you heard it? Hoo! hoo! there is a hen who has pulled out all her feathers for the sake of the cock; she'll freeze to death, if she isn't dead already. Hoo! hoo!"

"Where? where?" cooed the doves.

"In the neighbor's yard. I have as good as seen it myself; it is scarcely a proper story to tell, but it is quite true."

"We believe it! we believe every word of it," said the doves, and cooed down into their own poultry yard: "There is a hen, and some say there are two, who have pulled out all their feathers, that they may not look like the others, and thus attract the cock's attention. It is a dangerous thing to do, for one might catch cold and die of fever—and they are both dead."

"Wake up! wake up!" crowed the cock, and flew on to the fence; his eyes were still heavy with sleep, but he crowed all the same. "There are three hens that have died from an unfortunate attachment to a cock; they have plucked off all their feathers. It is indeed a dreadful story, and I won't keep it to myself: let it go further!"

"Let it go further!" piped the bats, and the hens cackled and the cocks crowed: "Let it go further! let it go further."

And so the story went from poultry-house to poultry-

"IT IS QUITE TRUE"

house, and at last it came back to the place from which it had first started:—

"There are five hens, they say, that have plucked off their feathers merely to prove which had grown thinnest through an unfortunate attachment to the cock; and they pecked at each other, and all fell down dead, to the shame and disgrace of the family, and the great loss of the proprietor."

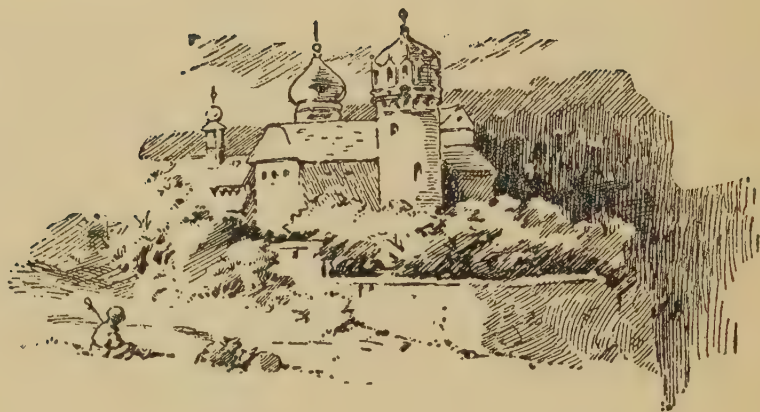
And the hen who had lost the little loose feather did not of course recognize her own story, but, as she was a respectable hen, she said—

"I do despise those fowls, but there are many of that kind and one ought not to hush up such an affair. I will do my best to have the story put into the newspapers, so that it may travel all over the country, for the fowls and their family have deserved it!"

And so it got into the papers, and was printed.

And it is quite true: one little feather may easily grow into five fowls.





The Snow Queen

FIRST STORY

WHICH TREATS OF THE MIRROR AND ITS FRAGMENTS

WELL, now let us begin. When we have got to the end of our story, we shall know more than we know now, for it was a wicked Goblin, it was one of the very worst—in fact, it was the Evil One himself!

One day he was in a really good humor, for he had made a mirror, which had the quality of causing everything good and beautiful that was reflected in it to shrink almost to nothing, whereas anything that was worthless and ugly became magnified and looked worse than ever. The most lovely landscapes appeared in this mirror like boiled spinach, and the handsome peo-

THE SNOW QUEEN

ple looked hideous, stood on their heads, and had no bodies. Their faces became distorted, so that it was impossible to recognize them, and if they had a freckle, it would be sure to spread out over their nose and mouth.

"It was exceedingly funny," said the Goblin.

Now, when a good and pious thought passed through the mind of anyone, it was shown in the mirror as a grin, and the Goblin would laugh at his clever invention. All those who attended his school—for he kept a goblin school—talked about it, and declared that a miracle had happened.

For the first time, they said, one could see what the world and mankind really looked like. They carried the mirror far and wide, until at last there was not a country nor a person that had not been distorted in it.

Then they wished to fly up to Heaven also, so as to make fun of the angels.

The higher they flew with the mirror, the more it grinned, so that they could hardly keep hold of it. Higher and higher they flew, nearer and nearer to Heaven; but suddenly the mirror trembled so violently with grinning that it flew out of their hands and dropped down to the earth, where it broke into a hundred million billion pieces and many more. Then it caused much more mischief than before, for some of the pieces were hardly as large as a grain of sand, and these flew around in the wide world, and when they got into the eyes of the people, there they remained. These people then saw everything reversed, or had only eyes for the wrong side of things, for every particle retained the same qualities as had previously been possessed by the entire mirror.

THE SNOW QUEEN

Some people even got a little fragment of the mirror into their hearts. This was very terrible indeed, for their hearts then became like a lump of ice. Some of the pieces were so large that they were used as window-panes, but it would be unwise to look through them at one's friends. Other pieces were put into spectacles, and it was a bad thing for the people who put on those spectacles in order to see rightly and be just.

The Goblin laughed until his sides ached, so greatly was he tickled with all this mischief.

But in the air some small fragments of glass were floating about.

Now we shall hear something about them.

SECOND STORY

A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL

In a large town, where there are so many houses and people that there is not room enough for everybody to have a little garden, and where for this reason most people must be satisfied with plants in flower-pots, lived two poor children who had a garden just a little larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister, but they loved one another as much as if they had been. Their parents lived opposite each other, high up in two garrets. Where the roof of one house joined the roof of the other, only the gutter running between them, a little gable projected from each of the houses. You only had to step over the gutter to get from one window to the other.

Outside, the parents had each a large wooden box,

THE SNOW QUEEN

and here grew the herbs for the kitchen and also a little rose-tree. There was one tree in each box, and they grew famously. The parents found out a way of placing the boxes across the gutter so that they reached almost from one window to the other, and looked quite charming—just like two flower-beds. The sweet-peas drooped over the boxes, and the rose-trees put forth



long branches, that interlaced with one another and climbed up against the windows. It was just like a triumphal arch of leaf and blossom. And as the boxes were very high, and the children knew that they must not climb up to them, they were often allowed to go out of the window to meet one another, and there, sit-

THE SNOW QUEEN

ting on their little stools under the roses, they could play very nicely. In the winter this pleasure came to an end. The window-panes were often frozen all over; but they would warm pennies on the stove and put them against the frozen pane and thus they made a nice round peep-hole. Behind each hole twinkled a merry little eye, one from each window—the little boy's and the little girl's. His name was Kay, and her name was Gerda. In the summer-time they could get out to each other in one jump; but in the winter they had to run downstairs, and then up quite a number of steps. Outside, the snow was whirling about.

"It is the white bees that are swarming," said the old Grandmother.

"Have they also a queen-bee?" asked the little boy, for he knew that real bees have their queen.

"Oh, yes," said the Grandmother: "she flies about where the swarm is thickest. She is the largest of them all; she never falls to the earth, but floats back again into the black sky. Many a winter night she flies through the streets of the town and peeps in at the windows, and then these freeze in a wonderful way, just as though they were covered with flowers."

"Yes, I have seen that," said both children, and they knew it must be true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"Well, let her come," said the little boy; "I will put her on the warm stove, and then she will melt." But the Grandmother stroked his hair, and told them other stories.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he crept up on to one of the chairs by the

THE SNOW QUEEN

window, and looked out through the little hole. A couple of snowflakes were falling outside, and one of them remained lying on the edge of one of the flower-boxes. The snowflake grew larger and larger, until at last it became a little lady dressed in the finest white gauze, that seemed to consist of millions of star-like crystals. She was very beautiful and delicate, but of ice—of dazzling, glittering ice. And yet she was alive. Her eyes twinkled like two shining stars, but there was no peace or rest in them. She nodded towards the window and beckoned with her hand. The little boy grew frightened, and jumped down from the chair; and then it seemed that a great bird flew past outside the window. The next day there was a clear frost, and then it thawed.

The spring came, the sun shone, the green buds peeped forth, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their own little garden in the gutter, on the roof, high up above all the other stories.

The roses bloomed most beautifully that summer. The little girl had learned a hymn, and in this hymn roses were mentioned. This reminded her of her own roses, and she sang the hymn to the little boy, and he sang it with her:—

“Roses grow in the shady vale
And tell of the Christ-Child a beautiful tale.”

And the little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked up at God’s bright sunshine and spoke to it as if the Christ-Child were there.

What beautiful summer days they were! How de-

THE SNOW QUEEN

lightful it was to be out there by the fresh rose-trees, which seemed as if they would bloom for ever! Kay and Gerda sat and looked in the picture-book of animals and birds. Then it was—the clock in the big church tower was just striking five—that little Kay said—

“Oh! something struck me in my heart, and now I have something in my eye.” The little girl flung her arms round his neck; he blinked his eyes; but no, there was nothing to be seen. “I think it has gone,” he said, but it was not gone: it was just one of those little glass particles that sprang from the mirror, the magic mirror. We remember it well—the ugly glass that reflected everything grand and good as small and hideous, while all that was bad and ugly was magnified, and every fault could clearly be seen. Poor little Kay had also a grain in his heart, and that would soon become like a lump of ice. Now it no longer hurt him, but the grain was still there.

“What are you crying for?” he asked; “it makes you look ugly. Oh, fie!” he exclaimed all at once, “this rose is worm-eaten, and look, that one is crooked! They are really very ugly roses, just like the box they grow in.”

So he gave the box a hard kick with his foot, and tore the two roses off.

“Kay, what are you doing?” cried the little girl.

But when he saw how frightened she was he tore off yet another rose, and ran in through his window away from pretty little Gerda.

Then she went after him with the picture-book, but he said it was only for babies. When the Grandmother told stories, he always came in with a “but”: and if

THE SNOW QUEEN

he could get a chance, he would go behind her back, put her spectacles on, and imitate her. He did this very cleverly, and people laughed at him. Very soon he could imitate the talk and ways of everybody in the street; everything, that is, that was extraordinary, and not nice, and people said, "How very clever the boy is!" But it was all due to the fragment of the mirror that had fallen into his eye, and the other fragment that was in his heart. It was owing to this that he teased even little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart.

His games now became quite different from what they had formerly been—they were so sensible. One winter's day, when the snowflakes were whirling about, he took a large magnifying-glass, held up the end of his blue coat, and let the flakes fall upon it.

"Now look in the glass, Gerda," he said. And every flake became much larger, and looked like a lovely flower, or a star with ten points. It was beautiful to look at!

"You see how curious they are," said Kay; "they are much more interesting than the real flowers, and there is not the slightest fault in them; they would be perfect if only they would not melt!"

Soon afterwards, Kay came in wearing thick gloves, and with his sleigh on his back. He called out to Gerda: "I have permission to go sleighing in the big square where the other boys play," and off he went. For in the square the boldest boys would often fasten their sleighs to the carts of the peasants, and ride with them quite a long distance. It was great fun!

Just as they were playing, a large sleigh came by. It was painted white, and inside sat somebody wrapped

THE SNOW QUEEN

in white fur, and wearing a rough white hood. The sleigh drove twice round the square; Kay quickly tied to it his own little sleigh, and was carried away behind it. Off they went, traveling more and more quickly down the street. The driver turned round and nodded in a friendly way to Kay, just as if they knew one another. Whenever Kay thought of loosening his little sleigh the driver would nod again, and Kay stayed where he was. They drove out through the gates of the town, and then the snow began to fall, so thickly that the little boy could hardly see a yard before him as they swept along.

Then he tried to untie the string so as to get loose from the big sleigh, but it was of no use: his little sleigh was fast bound, and off they went with the swiftness of the wind. He cried aloud, but nobody heard him; the snow was whirling about, and the sleigh flew on. Now and then it gave a jerk—it was as if it were passing over ditches and hedges. Kay was quite frightened, and tried to say his prayers, but he could remember nothing except the multiplication-table.

The snowflakes became larger and larger; until at last they looked like great white fowls. All at once they flew aside, the big sleigh stopped, and the person who was driving it rose up; fur and cap were of pure snow. It was a lady, tall, and slender, and dazzlingly white—it was the Snow Queen!

"We have driven well," she said, "but why do you shiver like that? Creep into my bearskin fur." She seated him in the sleigh beside her, wrapped the fur around him; and it seemed as if he had sunk down into a snowdrift. "Are you still shivering?" she asked,

THE SNOW QUEEN

and kissed him on the brow. Ugh! her kiss was colder than ice: it went straight through to his heart, which was already half frozen to a lump of ice. Kay felt as if he were about to die, but only for a moment, for then he recovered and no longer noticed the cold around him.

“My sleigh! do not forget my sleigh!”

That was the first thing he remembered, and it was tied on to one of the white fowls, which flew behind with the sleigh on its back.

The Snow Queen kissed Kay once more, and then he forgot little Gerda, and the Grandmother, and all at home.

“Now you must have no more kisses,” said the Snow Queen, “or I might kiss you to death.” Kay looked at her: she was very beautiful—a more clever or a lovelier face he could not imagine. She did not seem to be made of ice, as she had appeared to be when she sat outside the window and beckoned to him. In his eyes she was perfect. He was not at all afraid; he told her that he could do mental arithmetic, even with fractions, and that he knew the number of square miles in the whole country, as well as the number of inhabitants, and she always smiled. Then it seemed to him that he did not know very much after all, and he looked up into the wide, wide sky, as she flew with him high up in a black cloud, while the storm roared and howled as if it were singing old songs. They flew over forests and lakes, over land and sea. Beneath them the cold wind was whistling, the wolves were howling, and over the glistening snow flew black, screaming crows. But beyond, the moon shone large and bright in the

THE SNOW QUEEN

sky, and Kay gazed at it through the long, long winter night. In the daytime he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

THIRD STORY

THE FLOWER-GARDEN OF THE WOMAN WHO KNEW CONJURING

But how did little Gerda get on when Kay did not return? What had become of him? No one knew. No one could give any tidings. The boys could only say that they had seen him bind his sleigh to a very large one that drove into the street and out through the gate of the town. Nobody knew where he was; many tears were shed, and little Gerda wept long and bitterly. Then they said he was dead—that he had been drowned in the river which flowed close by the town! Oh! how very long were those dark winter days!

Then came the spring, with warmer sunshine.

“Kay is dead and gone!” said little Gerda.

“I do not believe that!” said the sunshine.

“He is dead and gone!” she said to the swallows.

“We do not believe it!” they replied. And at last little Gerda herself did not believe it.

“I will put on my new red shoes,” she said one morning, “the shoes that Kay has never seen, and then I will go down and beg the river to give him back.” It was very early; she kissed the old Grandmother, who was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went quite alone out of the town-gate down to the river.

“Is it true that you have taken my little playmate?” she said. “I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me.”



THE SNOW QUEEN

She thought that the waves nodded to her strangely. Then she took her red shoes, the dearest of all her possessions, and threw them both into the river; but they fell close to the shore, and the little waves carried them back to her. It seemed as if the river would not accept her greatest treasure, because it had not taken little Kay; but she thought that perhaps she had not thrown the shoes far enough into the stream.

So she crept into a boat that lay among the reeds; went to the farther end, and threw the shoes out. But the boat was not fastened to the shore, and her movement caused it to glide away from the land. She noticed this, and hurried to get out, but before she could reach the end nearest to the shore, the boat was quite a yard away, and was drifting faster and faster with the current.

Little Gerda was now very much afraid, and began to cry; but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they could not carry her to land; so they flew along the bank, and twittered as if to comfort her: "Here we are! here we are!"

The boat drifted with the stream, and little Gerda sat quite still, with only her stockings on her feet. Her little red shoes were floating on the water, but they could not overtake her, for the boat was leaving them farther and farther behind.

The banks on each side were very pretty. There were beautiful flowers, fine old trees, and slopes on which sheep and cows were grazing; but not a human being was to be seen.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," thought Gerda. And so she grew more cheerful, sat up in the boat, and hour after hour watched the beau-

THE SNOW QUEEN

tiful green banks. Then she came to a great cherry orchard, in which stood a little house with quaint red-and-blue windows, and a thatched roof.

Outside stood two wooden soldiers, who presented arms to those who sailed past. Gerda called out to them, for she thought they were alive, but of course they gave no answer. She approached very near to them, for the river carried the boat right up to the bank.

Then she called still louder, and an old woman came out of the house leaning on a crutch. She wore a large straw hat, on which the most beautiful flowers were painted.

"Poor little child!" she said, "what brings you here on this broad swift river, floating so far out into the wide world?"

And the old woman went straight down into the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it ashore, and lifted little Gerda out. The child was glad to be on dry land again, though she was a little afraid of the strange old woman.

"Come and tell me who you are, and how you came here," said the old lady. And Gerda told her everything; and the old woman shook her head and said, "H'm, h'm." When Gerda had told the whole story, and asked whether she had seen little Kay, the woman replied that he had not come yet, but that he would very probably pass that way. Meanwhile, she said, Gerda need not be anxious; she might taste her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were prettier than any picture-book, for each of them could tell a complete story.

Then the old woman took Gerda by the hand, led her into the little house, and locked the door.

THE SNOW QUEEN

The windows were very high, and the panes were red, blue, and yellow; so that the light shone through in various colors; but on the table were some very fine cherries, and Gerda ate as many as she liked, for this she had permission to do. While she was eating them, the old woman combed her hair with a golden comb,



so that the curls shone brightly round the sweet little face, which looked like a blush-rose.

"I have long wished for a dear little girl like you," said the old woman. "How nicely we two will get on together!" And as she combed little Gerda's hair, the child began to forget her little adopted brother Kay, for this old woman knew conjuring, although she was not a wicked witch. She only conjured a little for her own amusement, and she was very anxious to keep

THE SNOW QUEEN

little Gerda. So she went into the garden and pointed with her crutch at all the rose-trees; then, beautiful and blooming as they were, they sank immediately into the dark earth, and no one could tell where they had stood.

The old woman was afraid that when Gerda saw the roses, they would remind her of the roses at home, and that she would remember little Kay and run away.

Now she took Gerda out into the flower-garden. Oh! how fragrant and lovely it was! Every flower belonging to every season was there in full bloom; no picture-book could be richer in color or more beautiful. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the tall cherry-trees; then she was tucked into a lovely bed with red-silk pillows stuffed with blue violets; and as she slept she dreamed as happily as any queen on her wedding-day.

When the morning came she was again allowed to play with the flowers in the warm sunshine—and thus many days went by. Gerda knew every flower; but although there were many of them, it seemed to her that one was missing—which one, she did not know. One day she sat looking at the old lady's hat with the painted flowers, and the very prettiest of them all was a rose.

The old lady had forgotten to remove it from her hat when she caused the other roses to disappear into the earth. But so it always happens if you do not keep your wits about you.

"Why!" said Gerda, "there are no roses here."

And she ran in and out among the flower-beds, and searched and searched, but there was not a rose to be found.

THE SNOW QUEEN

Then she sat down and wept, and her warm tears fell just upon the spot where a Rose-tree lay buried. When her tears moistened the earth, the tree at once sprouted up as full of blossom as when it had sunk beneath the ground. Gerda embraced it, kissed the Roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and of little Kay.

"Oh, how I have wasted my time!" said the little girl. "I came to find Kay! Do you know where he is?" she asked the Roses. "Do you believe he is dead and gone?"

"He is not dead," said the Roses; "we have been in the ground, where all dead people are, but Kay was not there."

"Thank you," said little Gerda, and she went to the other flowers, looked in their little cups, and asked: "Do you know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sun, dreaming her own fairy-tale. Many and many a story they told little Gerda, but none of them knew anything about Kay.

And what said the Tiger Lily?—

"Do you hear the drum?—'Boom! boom!' There are only two notes, always 'Boom! boom!' Listen to the dirge of the women! here the call of the priests! The Hindu widow stands in her long red robe on the pyre; the flames rise up around her and her dead husband; but the woman is thinking of the living one who is present, of him whose eyes shine more brightly, whose fiery glances burn into her soul more ardently, than the flames which are soon to consume her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart die in the flames of the funeral pile?"

"I do not understand it at all," said little Gerda.

THE SNOW QUEEN

"That is my story," said the Lily.

What said the Convolvulus?—

"Overhanging the narrow highway stands an ancient baronial castle; thick ivy is climbing leaf over leaf up the old red walls, as far as the balcony. Here stands a beautiful girl, bending over the balustrade, and looking into the road below. No rose hangs fresher from its branch than she; no apple-blossom wafted from the tree floats more lightly on the wind. Listen to the rustle of her rich silken robe! 'Is he not yet coming?' she says."

"Is it Kay whom you mean?" asked little Gerda.

"I am only telling my fairy-tale—my dream," replied the Convolvulus.

What said the Snowdrop?—

"Between two trees hangs a plank suspended by ropes; it is a swing. Two pretty little girls, in dresses as white as snow, and with long green silken ribbons fluttering from their hats, are sitting swinging. Their brother, taller than they, stands up in the swing, and has wound his arm around the rope to steady himself, for in one hand he holds a little cup, and in the other a clap pipe; he is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing moves to and fro, and the bubbles rise into the air with beautiful ever-changing colors; the last one still hangs from the pipe-bowl, swaying in the breeze. The swing moves to and fro. A little black dog, light as the bubbles, stands up on his hind legs and tries to reach the swing; it moves on, the dog falls, barks angrily at being teased, and the bubbles burst. A swinging plank, the picture of a bursting bubble—that is my song."

THE SNOW QUEEN

"That may be, and what you tell me is very pretty, but you speak very sadly, and you do not mention little Kay at all."

What said the Hyacinths?—

"There were three beautiful sisters, transparent and delicate. The dress of the first was red, of the second,



blue, and of the third, white. Hand in hand they danced in the bright moonlight, by the shore of a calm lake. They were not elf-maidens, but human children. There was a sweet fragrance in the air, the girls disappeared into the forest—the fragrance became stronger. Three coffins, in which lay three beautiful maidens, glided from the thickest part of the forest

THE SNOW QUEEN

across the lake; fire-flies shone in the air like small floating lights. Do the dancing-girls sleep, or are they dead? The flower-scent says that they have ceased to live; the evening-bell tolls for the dead."

"You make me quite sorrowful," said little Gerda. "Your perfume is so strong that I cannot help thinking of the poor dead maidens! Oh! is little Kay really dead? The Roses have been down in the earth, and they say that he is not!"

"Ding-dong!" rang the Hyacinth bells; "we toll not for little Kay—we know him not; we sing our own song, the only one we know."

And Gerda went to the Buttercup, which was gleaming through the fresh green leaves. "You are a bright little sun!" said Gerda; "tell me if you know where I can find my playmate!"

And the Buttercup shone brightly, and looked at little Gerda again. What song could the Buttercup sing? It was not about little Kay.

"In the little back-yard the dear old sun was shining cheerfully, on the first day of spring. His rays were streaming down the neighbor's white wall; close by, the first yellow flowers were blooming, sparkling like gold in the warm sunshine. Old Grandmother was out in her chair; her granddaughter, the poor and pretty servant-maid, came home on a short visit; she kissed the Grandmother. There was gold in the blessed kiss—gold in the mouth, gold in the heart, gold in the early morning hour. That is my little story," said the Buttercup.

"My poor old Grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "How she must long for me, and be as sorry for me as she was for little Kay! But I will soon come back, and

THE SNOW QUEEN

then I will bring Kay with me. It is of no use to ask the flowers—they only know their own song; they can give me no good advice.”

And then she lifted up her little frock so as to run more quickly, but the Narcissus struck her on the leg as she passed by. Then she stopped, looked at the tall flower, and asked: “Do you, perhaps, know anything?” and bent quite down to the flower. And what did it say?

“I can see myself! I can see myself!” said the Narcissus. “Oh! what a beautiful perfume I have! High up in a garret stands a half-dressed ballet-girl. She stands now on one leg, now on both, and kicks at all the world; she is only an illusion. She is pouring water from the teapot over a piece of stuff which she is holding—it is in her bodice. Cleanliness is a good thing! On a peg hangs a white skirt, which has also been washed in the teapot and dried on the roof. She puts it on, and ties her saffron handkerchief round her neck, and the dress looks whiter than before. One leg in the air!—see how straight she stands on one stalk! I can see myself! I can see myself!”

“I don’t care a bit about that,” said Gerda; “that is nothing to me!” And so she ran away to the far end of the garden. The door was locked, but she pulled at the rusty hinges until they gave way; the door sprang open, and little Gerda ran barefoot out into the wide world. She looked behind her three times, but nobody followed her.

At last she could run no longer, and sat down on a big stone, and when she looked round, the summer was gone. It was late in the autumn, but she had not noticed this in the beautiful garden, where there was

THE SNOW QUEEN

always sunshine, and the flowers of every season were in bloom.

"Oh, dear," she said, "how I have wasted my time! It is now autumn, and I must not rest," and she rose up to go.

Alas! how sore and weary were her little feet. Everything around her looked cold and rough; the long willow leaves were quite yellow, and the mist dropped from them like water—one after another the leaves were falling. Only the sloe-tree still bore fruit, but it was so sour that it set the teeth on edge.

Oh! how gray and gloomy it seemed out in the wide world!

FOURTH STORY

THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS

Gerda had to rest again. Suddenly a big Crow came hopping across the snow, just opposite to where she sat. He had been sitting a long while looking at her, turning his head to and fro; but now he said, "Caw! caw! Good day! good day!" He could not speak more plainly, but he meant to be kind to the little girl, and asked where she was going all alone out in the wide world.

The word "alone" Gerda understood very well: she quite felt the meaning of it; so she told the Crow the whole story of her life and adventures, and asked if he had seen Kay.

The Crow nodded very gravely, and said—

"That may be! that may be!"

"What! do you think so?" cried the little girl, and

THE SNOW QUEEN

she nearly squeezed the Crow to death, so heartily did she kiss him.

"Gently, gently!" said the Crow. "I believe it may be little Kay, but by this time he must have forgotten you for the Princess."

"Does he live with a Princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes; listen," said the Crow. "But it is very difficult for me to speak your language. If you knew the Crow language, I could tell you much better."

"No, I never learned that," said Gerda; "but Grandmother knew it, and other languages too. If only I had learned it!"

"It doesn't matter," said the Crow. "I will tell you the story as well as I can, but it will be bad at the best."

And so the Crow told what he knew:—

"In the kingdom where we now are, lives a Princess who is very, very learned. She has read all the newspapers that exist in the world, and has forgotten them again, so very learned is she. One day she was sitting on the throne—and they say that is not so very pleasant after all—when she happened to sing a song, which was just this:—

"'Why should I not married be?'

"'Now, there is something in that,' she said. So she wished to marry, but she had first to find a husband who could answer when he was spoken to, one who could do more than merely look handsome, for that is so tiresome. Then she summoned all her maids-of-honor by beat of drum, and when they heard her intention they were highly delighted. 'It is a capital idea,'

THE SNOW QUEEN

said each of them; 'I thought of the very same thing the other day!' You may be certain that every word I am telling you is true," added the Crow, "for I have a tame sweetheart who hops about as she pleases in the castle, and she has told me everything." She was, of course, also a Crow—this sweetheart, for birds of a feather flock together.

"The newspapers immediately appeared with a border of hearts and the Princess's signature. It was announced that every young man who was good-looking might come to the castle and speak with the Princess, who would choose for her husband the one whose conversation showed that he felt most at his ease. Yes, yes," said the Crow, "you may believe me; it's as true as I am sitting here. People came flocking in; there was a great crowding and much running to and fro, but no one succeeded on the first or second day.

"They could all speak very well when they were out in the street, but when they passed through the palace gates, and saw the Guards all in silver, and the lackeys in gold on the staircase, and the great rooms brilliantly lighted up, they became quite confused. And when they stood before the throne, on which the Princess sat they had nothing whatever to say, but merely repeated the last word she had spoken, which, of course, she had no particular wish to hear over again. It was just as if the people in there had taken—let us say—snuff, and fallen asleep; but as soon as they found themselves in the street again, they were able to talk easily enough. There was quite a procession, all the way from the town-gate to the palace. I went myself to see it," said the Crow. "They were hungry and thirsty, but in the palace they did not receive so much

THE SNOW QUEEN

as a glass of lukewarm water. Some of the wisest had, of course, brought bread-and-butter with them, but nobody would share anything with his neighbor, for he thought: 'If he looks hungry, the Princess won't have him.'"

"But Kay, little Kay?" asked Gerda. "When did he come? Was he among the crowd?"



"Wait a minute. We're just coming to him. It was on the third day there came a little fellow, without horse or carriage, marching quite pluckily up to the castle. His eyes sparkled like yours, he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very poor."

"That was Kay!" cried Gerda in great delight. "Oh, then I have found him!" And she clapped her hands.

THE SNOW QUEEN

"He had a little knapsack on his back," said the Crow.

"No, that must have been his sleigh," said Gerda, "for he went away with a sleigh."

"That may be," said the Crow; "I did not take much notice. But this much I know from my tame sweetheart, that when he passed through the palace gate and saw the Life Guards in silver, and mounted the staircase and saw the lackeys in gold, he was not in the least confused. He nodded, and said to them: 'It must be tiresome to stand on the stairs—I'd rather go in.' The halls were glittering with light; Privy Counsellors and Excellencies walked about with bare feet, carrying golden vessels; it was enough to make one feel serious; and his boots creaked most awfully, but he was not frightened in the least."

"That is certainly Kay!" cried Gerda. "He had new boots on; I've heard them creak in Grandmother's room."

"Well, they did creak," said the Crow. "And he went boldly up to the Princess herself, who sat on a pearl as big as a spinning-wheel; and all the maids-of-honor with their maids and their maids' servants, and all the cavaliers with their pages and their pages' valets, who in turn kept their men-servants, were standing around, and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. The pages' valets and men-servants, who always wore slippers, one could hardly bear to look at, so proudly did they stand in the doorway!"

"That must have been terrible!" said little Gerda. "And yet Kay won the Princess?"

THE SNOW QUEEN

"If I had not been a Crow I would have married her myself, although I am engaged. They say he spoke as well as I do when I speak the Crow's language; I heard that from my tame sweetheart. He was merry and handsome; he had not come to woo the Princess, but only to learn how wise she was; and he was pleased with her and she with him."

"Well, of course it was Kay!" said Gerda. "He was so clever—he could do mental arithmetic up to fractions. Oh! will you not lead me to the castle, too?"

"That is easily said," replied Crow. "But how are we to manage it? I will talk it over with my tame sweetheart; she may be able to help us; but I must tell you this—a little girl like you will never get permission to go right in."

"Yes, I shall," said Gerda. "When Kay hears that I am here he will come out at once, and bring me in."

"Wait for me yonder at the grating," said the Crow, and he wagged his head and flew away.

It was not until late in the evening, when it had grown dark, that the Crow returned.

"Caw! caw!" he said. "My sweetheart sends you greeting, and here is a little loaf for you. She took it from the kitchen. There is plenty of bread there, and you must be hungry. It is impossible for you to get into the palace, for you are barefoot, and the Guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would never allow it. But don't cry; you shall go up all the same. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase that leads up to the bedroom, and she knows, too, where she can get the key."

And they went into the garden, through the grand

THE SNOW QUEEN

avenue, where the leaves were falling one after another; and when the lights were put out in the palace one by one, the Crow led Gerda to a back door, which stood half-open.

Oh! how Gerda's heart beat with fear and longing! It seemed as if she were going to do something wicked; and yet she only wanted to know if it were little Kay. Yes, it must be he! How well she remembered his bright eyes and his long hair; she fancied he would be glad to see her; to hear what a long way she had come for his sake; and to know how sorry they all were at home when he did not come back. Oh, how her heart beat with fear and joy!

Now they were on the staircase. A little lamp was burning in an alcove, and in the middle of the floor stood the tame Crow, turning her head from side to side and looking at Gerda, who bowed as Grandmother had taught her.

"My betrothed has spoken of you, my little lady," said the tame Crow. "Your 'Vita' as we may call it, is very touching. Will you take the lamp, and I will lead the way? We will go straight on, for then we shall meet nobody."

"It seems to me as if someone were coming just behind us," said Gerda, as something rushed by her; it seemed like shadows along the wall; horses with flying manes and slender legs, huntsmen and ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"They are only the Dreams," said the Crow; "they come to take their Highnesses' thoughts out hunting. It is a good thing too, for you will have a better chance of looking at them in bed. But remember, if you rise to honor and favor, to show a grateful heart."

THE SNOW QUEEN

“What is the good of talking of that?” said the Crow from the wood.

They now came into the first hall. It was hung with rose-colored satin, and its walls were decorated with artificial flowers. Here the Dreams again came flitting by, and they moved so quickly that Gerda could not see the great folk who were there. Each of the halls was more splendid than the other; it was enough to bewilder one. Now at last they were in the bed-chamber. Here the ceiling looked like a great palm-tree with leaves of glass—of costly glass; and in the middle of the floor two beds were hanging on a thick stalk of gold, and each of them looked like a lily. One was white, and in that lay the Princess; the other was red, and here Gerda expected to find little Kay. She drew one of the red leaves aside, and then she saw a little brown neck—oh! that must be Kay! She called his name aloud, and held the lamp towards him—the Dreams rushed into the room, again on horseback; he awoke, turned his head, and—it was not little Kay!

The Prince was only like him in the neck; but nevertheless he was young and handsome. The Princess looked out from the white lily, and asked who was there. Then little Gerda wept, and told the whole of her story, and all that the Crows had done for her.

“You poor little child!” said the Prince and Princess.

And they praised the Crows, and declared that they were not angry with them at all, but they were not to do it again. However, they should be rewarded.

“Would you sooner fly about in freedom?” asked the Princess, “or would you prefer fixed appointments

THE SNOW QUEEN

as Court Crows, with the right to everything that is left in the kitchen!"

And the two Crows bowed, and asked for fixed appointments, for they thought of their old age, and said: "It is good to have something for our old days."

And the Prince got up out of his bed, and let Gerda sleep in it: and more than that he could not do. She folded her little hands, and thought: "How good men and animals are!" And then she closed her eyes and fell quietly to sleep. All the Dreams came flying in again, looking like angels, and they drew a little sleigh, on which Kay sat, nodding; but all this was only a dream, and therefore it vanished as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet; and they invited her to stay in the castle and enjoy herself. But she only begged for a little carriage with a horse, and a little pair of boots; then she would drive out again into the wide world to find Kay.

And they gave her not only boots, but a muff as well—she was quite smartly dressed; and when she was ready to depart, a new coach of pure gold drew up before the door. The coat-of-arms of the Prince and Princess shone from it like a star, and coachman, footmen, and outriders—for there were outriders too—had golden crowns on their heads.

The Prince and Princess in person helped her into the carriage, and wished her all good fortune. The forest Crow, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles. He sat by Gerda's side, for he could not bear riding with his back to the horses. The other Crow stood in the doorway flapping her wings; she did not go with them, for she had suffered

THE SNOW QUEEN

from headache ever since she obtained a fixed appointment and had too much to eat. Inside, the coach was lined with sugar-plums, and on the seat there were fruit and ginger biscuits.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried the Princess, and little Gerda wept, and the Crow wept. So they went on for the first three miles; then the Crow also said good-by, and this was the most sorrowful parting of all. The Crow flew up on a tree, and beat his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which glittered like the rays of the sun.

FIFTH STORY

THE LITTLE ROBBER-GIRL

They drove on through the dark forest, but the coach gleamed like a torch, dazzling the robbers' eyes, and they could not resist the temptation.

"That is gold! that is gold!" they cried, rushed forward, and seized the horses, killed the little outriders, coachman, and footmen, and then pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is fat—she is pretty—she is fed with nut-kernels!" said the old robber-woman, who had a long beard, and eyebrows that hung down over her eyes. "She is as good as a little pet lamb; how nice she will taste." Saying this, she drew forth a shining knife, that gleamed horribly.

"Oh!" screamed the old woman at the same moment, for she was bitten in the ear by her own little daughter, whom she carried on her back, and who was very wild

THE SNOW QUEEN

and naughty. "You ugly thing!" said the mother; and she had not time to kill Gerda.



"She shall play with me," said the little robber-girl. "She shall give me her muff, and her pretty dress, and sleep with me in my bed!" and she bit her mother again,

THE SNOW QUEEN

so that the robber-woman jumped high in the air, and twirled right round, and all the robbers laughed, and said: "Look how she dances with her kid."

"I want to get into the carriage," said the little robber-girl, and she would have her own way, for she was terribly spoiled, and very obstinate. She and Gerda sat in the carriage, and drove over stock and stone deep into the forest. The little robber-girl was as big as Gerda, but stronger, had broader shoulders, and a dark skin; her eyes were quite black, and looked almost mournful. She clasped little Gerda round the waist, and said: "They shall not kill you as long as I do not get angry with you. You are surely a Princess?"

"No," replied Gerda. And she told her all that had happened to her, and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber-girl looked at her quite seriously, nodded slightly, and said: "They shall not kill you, even if I do get angry with you, for then I will do it myself," and she dried Gerda's eyes, and put both her own hands into the beautiful muff that was so soft and warm.

Now the carriage stopped; they were in the middle of the courtyard in the robbers' castle. It was cracked from top to bottom; ravens and crows flew out of the gaping holes; and big bulldogs, each of which looked as if he could swallow a man, were jumping high into the air; but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the great old smoky hall a bright fire was burning in the middle of the stone floor. The smoke passed along under the roof, and had to find its way out as best it could. In a huge cauldron the soup was boiling, and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

THE SNOW QUEEN

"You shall sleep here to-night with me and with all my little animals," said the robber-girl.

They ate and drank, and then went to a corner where straw and carpets were spread out. Above, on laths and perches, nearly a hundred pigeons were sitting; they all seemed asleep, but they turned a little when the two little girls approached.

"They are all mine," said the little robber-girl; and she quickly seized one of the nearest, held it by its feet, and shook it so that it flapped its wings. "Kiss it!" she cried, and flapped it in Gerda's face. "There sit the wood-pigeons," she continued, pointing to a hole in the wall across which a number of laths had been nailed. "They are wood rascals, those two; they would fly away at once if they were not kept well locked up. And here's my old sweetheart 'Ba'; and she pulled a reindeer out by the horn. It had a polished copper ring round its neck, and was tied up. "We are obliged to tie him up well, or he would run away from us. Every evening I tickle his neck with my sharp knife; he is greatly afraid of that."

And the little girl drew a long knife from a cleft in the wall, and let it glide over the Reindeer's neck. The poor creature kicked out with his legs, and the little robber-girl laughed, and drew Gerda into bed with her.

"Do you keep the knife while you are asleep?" asked Gerda, looking at it with alarm.

"I always sleep with a knife," replied the robber-girl. "One never knows what may happen. But now tell me again what you told me before about little Kay, and why you came out into the wide world."

And Gerda told it again from the beginning; and the wood pigeons cooed up in their cage, but the other

THE SNOW QUEEN

pigeons slept. The little robber-girl put her arm round Gerda's neck, held her knife in the other hand, and slept so that one could hear her; but Gerda could not close her eyes at all—she did not know whether she was to live or die.

The robbers were sitting round the fire, singing and drinking, and the old robber-woman reeled about. It was quite terrible for a little girl to look at.

Then the wood-pigeons said: "Coo! coo! we have seen little Kay. A white hen was carrying his sleigh; he sat in the Snow Queen's carriage, which rushed away high above the forest, when we were lying in our nest. She blew upon us little ones, and all died except us two. Coo! coo!"

"What are you saying up there?" cried Gerda. "Which way was the Snow Queen traveling? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was probably going to Lapland, for there they always have ice and snow. Ask the Reindeer who is tied by the cord."

"There is ice and snow there; it is a beautiful country," said the Reindeer. "You can run about as you please in the deep gleaming valleys. There the Snow Queen has her summer tent; but her real castle is up towards the North Pole, on the island called Crystalline."

"Oh, Kay! little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"You must lie still," said the robber-girl, "or I will thrust my knife into you."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the wood-pigeons had said, and the robber-girl looked quite grave, but nodded her head and said: "It's all the same; it's all

THE SNOW QUEEN

the same! Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" the animal replied. "I was born and bred there; I ran about there in the snow-fields," and his eyes sparkled.

"Listen!" said the robber-girl to Gerda. "All our men, as you see, are gone away. Only mother is here still, and she will stay; but later in the morning she will drink out of the big bottle, and sleep for a little while; then I'll do something for you."

She sprang out of bed, clasped her arms round her mother's neck and pulled her beard, crying, "Good morning, my own old nanny-goat." And her mother filiped her nose till it was red and blue; but it was all done in pure love.

When the mother had drunk out of her bottle and had gone to sleep, the robber-girl went to the Reindeer and said—

"I should like to tickle you many a time yet with the knife, for you are so very funny then. But never mind, I will loosen your rope, and help you out, so that you may run to Lapland; but you must make good use of your legs, and carry this little girl for me to the palace of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. I suppose you have heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you are fond of listening."

The Reindeer sprang up with joy. The robber-girl lifted little Gerda on to its back, and took care to tie her fast, and even gave her a little cushion to sit on.

"There are your fur boots," she said, "for it will be cold; but I will keep the muff, for it is really too pretty. However, you shall not be cold, for here are mother's big mittens—they reach quite up to your

THE SNOW QUEEN

elbows. Put them on; there, now your hands look just like my ugly old mother's."

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't bear to see you weep," said the little robber-girl. "Now you must look happy. And here are two loaves and a ham for you, so that you may not be hungry." These were tied on the Reindeer's back. The little robber-girl opened the door, coaxed in all the big dogs, then cut the rope with her sharp knife, and said to the Reindeer "Now run! but take care of the little girl!"

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the big mittens towards the little robber-girl, and said, "Farewell!"

And the Reindeer ran over stock and stone, away through the great forest, over marshes and steppes. "Hiss! hiss!" it said in the sky. It seemed as if it were sneezing red flames.

"Those are my old Northern Lights," said the Reindeer. "See how they glow!" And then he ran on faster than ever, day and night.

The loaves were eaten, and the ham as well, and then they found themselves in Lapland.

SIXTH STORY

THE LAPLAND WOMAN AND THE FINLAND WOMAN

THEY stopped at a little hut. It was very mean-looking; the roof sloped down to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep on their hands and knees when they wanted to

THE SNOW QUEEN

get in or out. Nobody was at home but an old Lapland woman, frying fish by the light of a train-oil lamp; and the Reindeer told Gerda's whole history; but first he told his own, for this seemed to the Reindeer the more important. Gerda was so exhausted by the cold that she could not speak.

"Oh! you poor things," said the Lapland woman; "you have a long run yet! You must go more than a hundred miles into Finland, for the Snow Queen is staying there in the country, burning Bengal lights every evening. I will write a few words on a dry cod, for I have no paper, and I will give you that to take to the Finland woman; she can give you better information than I."

When Gerda had warmed herself and had something to eat and drink, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dry codfish, told Gerda to take care of it, and tied her on the Reindeer, who then ran on again. "Flash! flash!" it said high in the air; and the most beautiful Northern Lights glowed throughout the whole of the night. And so they got to Finland, and knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman, for she had not even a door.

It was so hot inside that the woman herself went about almost naked. She was very small, and always grumbling. She at once loosened little Gerda's dress and took off the child's mittens and boots; otherwise it would have been too hot for her. She laid a piece of ice on the Reindeer's head, and then she read what was written on the codfish. Three times she read it through, and then she knew it by heart; so she popped the fish into the saucepan for it was good to eat, and she never wasted anything.

THE SNOW QUEEN

Then the Reindeer told his own story, and afterwards little Gerda's; and the Finland woman blinked with her clever eyes; but said nothing. "You are so learned," said the Reindeer; "I know you can tie all the winds of



the world together with a bit of sewing-thread: if the sailor unties one knot, he has a good wind; if he loosens the second, it blows hard; but if he unties the third and the fourth, then comes a storm fierce enough to uproot

THE SNOW QUEEN

the trees in the forest. Can you not give the little girl a draught, so that she may have the power of twelve men, and overcome the Snow Queen?"

"Twelve men's power!" repeated the Finland woman. "Much use that would be!" And she went to a shelf, and took down a large rolled-up skin, and untied it. Wonderful characters were written upon it, and the Finland woman read till the water streamed down her forehead.

But the Reindeer again begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked so earnestly at the Finland woman, with such pleading, tearful eyes, that her own began to blink again. She drew the Reindeer into a corner, and whispered to him, while she laid fresh ice upon his head. "Little Kay is certainly at the Snow Queen's, and very much pleased he is to be there. He thinks it is the best place in the world; but that is because he has a splinter of glass in his heart and a little grain of glass in his eye. These must be got out, or he will never become a human being again, and the Snow Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can you not present little Gerda with something that will give her power over them all?"

"I can give her no greater power than she has already. Don't you see how great that is?—don't you see how men and animals are obliged to serve her, and how well she got on in the world even with bare feet? She must not learn to know her power through us; it is in her heart, and consists in this—that she is a sweet, innocent child. If she cannot, by herself, gain access to the Snow Queen and remove the glass fragments from little Kay, we cannot help her. Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins; you can carry the little

THE SNOW QUEEN

girl there, and set her down by the great bush that stands with its red berries in the snow. Don't stay gossiping, but make haste, and get back here."

And then the Finland woman lifted little Gerda on to the Reindeer, who ran as fast as he could.

"Oh, I haven't my boots, and I haven't my mittens!" cried little Gerda. She felt the want of them in the cutting cold; but the Reindeer dared not stop. He ran on until he came to the great bush with the red berries; here he put Gerda down, kissed her mouth, and great bright tears rolled down over the animal's cheeks. Then he ran back as fast as he could.

There stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, in the middle of this desolate, ice-cold Finland.

She ran forward as fast as possible. There came a whole regiment of snowflakes; but they did not fall down from above, for the sky was quite bright, and shone with the Northern Lights; the snowflakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they seemed. Gerda remembered how large and wonderful the snowflakes had appeared when she looked at them through the magnifying-glass, but here they were different—large and quite terrible—for they were alive: they were the sentries of the Snow Queen, and had the strangest shapes. Some looked like great, hideous porcupines, others like knots of snakes stretching forth their heads, and others like little fat bears, with their hair standing on end. They were all brilliantly white; they were all living snowflakes.

Then little Gerda said her prayers; but the cold was so great that she could see her own breath: it came from her mouth like smoke. The breath became thicker and thicker, and formed itself into little transparent angels,

THE SNOW QUEEN

who grew larger and larger as they touched the earth; all had helmets on their heads, and shields and spears in their hands. They became more and more numerous, and when Gerda had finished her prayer a whole legion stood around her. They struck with their spears at the terrible snowflakes, shattering them into a hundred pieces; and little Gerda went on quite safely and bravely. The angels stroked her hands and feet, so that she felt the cold less than before, and she hastened on to the Snow Queen's palace.

But now we must see how Kay was getting on. He certainly was not thinking of little Gerda, and least of all, that she was standing outside the palace.

SEVENTH STORY

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SNOW QUEEN'S PALACE, AND AFTERWARDS

The walls of the palace were formed of the drifting snow, and the windows and doors of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred halls, and the greatest extended for several miles, just as the snow drifted. All were illuminated by the strong Northern Lights, and how great and empty, how icily cold and glittering they were! There was never any merriment, not even so much as a little bears' ball, at which the storm could have played the music, and the white bears could have walked about on their hind legs and shown off their pretty manners; never any little game of snapdragon or touch; never a little bit of tea-table gossip among the young lady white foxes. Empty, vast, and cold were

THE SNOW QUEEN

the halls of the Snow Queen! The Northern Lights shone so evenly that one could tell when they rose to their highest or sank to their lowest. In the midst of this vast empty snow-hall was a frozen lake, that had burst into a thousand pieces; but each piece was so exactly like the others that it was a perfect work of art, and in the center of the lake, when she was at home, sat the Snow Queen. She was wont to say that she sat in "the Mirror of Reason," and that this was the only one, and the best in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold—indeed, almost black; but he did not notice it, for the Snow Queen had kissed the cold shudderings away from him, and his heart was like a lump of ice. He was dragging about some sharp flat pieces of ice, and joining them together in all possible ways, as if he wished to make something out of them—just as when we have little tablets of wood, and place them together to form figures in what we call "the Chinese puzzle." Kay also made figures, and most wonderful ones they were. He was playing the game of Reason. In his eyes these figures were very remarkable and of the highest importance; but that was because of the grain of glass sticking in his eye. He laid out the figures so as to form a word—but he could never manage to get the word he wanted—the word "Eternity." And the Snow Queen had said: "If you can find out this figure, you shall become your own master, and I will give you the whole world, and a new pair of skates." But he could not.

"Now I must haste away to warmer lands," said the Snow Queen. "I will go and look down into the black pots." These were the volcanoes, Etna and Vesuvius, as they are called. "I shall make them a little white!

THE SNOW QUEEN

That is necessary; it will be good for the lemons and grapes."

And so the Snow Queen flew away, and Kay sat quite alone in the great icy hall, which was a mile in length, and looked at the pieces of ice, and thought, and thought, so that he cracked as if he were breaking. So stiff and still did he sit that one might have thought that he was frozen to death.

At this moment little Gerda stepped through the great gate into the palace. Cutting winds were raging within, but she said her evening prayer, and the winds were lulled to rest. Then she entered the vast halls that were so cold and empty. She beheld Kay, knew him at once, threw her arms around his neck, and holding him fast, cried out: "Kay, dear little Kay! at last I have found you!"

But he sat quite motionless, stiff and cold. Then little Gerda wept hot tears; they fell upon his breast; they penetrated into his heart, and thawed the lump of ice, melting even the little piece of glass within it.

He looked at her, and she sang the hymn:—

"Roses grow in the shady vale,
And tell of the Christ-Child a beautiful tale."

Then Kay burst into tears; and he wept so much that the splinter of glass came out of his eye. He recognised her, and cried in delight: "Gerda! dear Gerda! where have you been all this time? And where have I been?" And he looked all around him. "How cold it is here! how large and empty!"

And he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy. It was so beautiful that even the pieces of ice

THE SNOW QUEEN

danced about; and when they were tired and lay down, they formed themselves into the very letters which the Snow Queen had told Kay he must find if he wished to be free, and for which she would give him the whole world and a new pair of skates.

And Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they grew rosy again; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he became healthy and cheerful. The Snow Queen might now come home—his letter of freedom stood written in shining characters of ice. And they took each other by the hand, and wandered out from the great palace. They talked of Grandmother, and the roses on the roof; and wherever they went the winds lay down and the sun burst forth. When they reached the bush with the red berries, the Reindeer was standing there waiting; he had brought another Reindeer, whose udders were full, and who gave the little ones its warm milk, and kissed them. Then they carried Kay and Gerda, first to the Finland woman, where they warmed themselves in the hot room, and received instructions for their journey home, and then to the Lapland woman, who had made them new clothes and put her sleigh in order.

The Reindeer and his companion ran by their side, and followed them as far as the boundary of the country. Here, where the first green leaves were sprouting, Kay and Gerda took leave of the Reindeer and the Lapland woman. "Farewell!" they said. The first little birds of spring began to twitter, and the forest trees were in bud. Suddenly a young girl came riding out of the wood on a splendid horse which Gerda knew (for it was the one that had drawn her golden coach). She had a shining red cap on her head and a pair of

THE SNOW QUEEN

pistols in front of her. This was the little robber-girl, who was tired of staying at home, and wanted to go first to the North, and then, if that did not satisfy her, to some other region. She knew Gerda at once, and Gerda knew her too; it was a joyful meeting. "You are a fine fellow to go a-gadding!" she said to little Kay. "I wonder whether you deserve that anyone should run to the end of the world for your sake." And Gerda patted her on the cheek, and asked after the Prince and Princess.

"They have gone to foreign countries," said the robber-girl.

"But the Crow?" said Gerda.

"Why, the Crow is dead," she replied. "The tame sweetheart is now a widow, and goes about with a bit of black worsted round her leg. She complains bitterly, but it is nothing but talk. But now tell me how you have fared, and how you got hold of him."

And Gerda and Kay both told their story.

"Snipp-snapp-snure-purre-base-llurre!" said the robber-girl.

And she took them both by the hand, and promised that if ever she came through their town, she would come up and pay them a visit. And then she rode away into the wide world.

But Gerda and Kay went hand in hand, and as they wandered on, the flowers of spring burst forth, and all the world was clad in green. The church bells pealed, and they recognized the high steeples and the great town; it was the one in which they lived. They went to the Grandmother's door, up the stairs, and into the room, where everything remained in its usual place. The grandfather's clock said, "Tick! tack!" and the

THE SNOW QUEEN

hands were moving; but as Kay and Gerda passed through the door they noticed that they were now grown-up.

The roses out on the roof were blooming at the open windows; there stood the children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat down, and held each other by the hand. They had forgotten the cold empty splendor of the Snow Queen's palace—it was now like a painful dream. The Grandmother was sitting in God's bright sunshine, reading aloud out of the Bible:—"Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God."

And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old hymn:—

"Roses grow in the shady vale,
And tell of the Christ-Child a beautiful tale."

There they both sat, grown up, and yet children—children in heart—and it was summer, warm, beautiful summer.



“What Father Does Is Always Right”

I WILL now tell you a story, which I heard when I was a little boy. Every time I have thought of this story, it has seemed to me to become more and more beautiful; for it is with stories, as it is with many people: they become prettier as they grow older, and that is very charming!

I have no doubt that you have been out in the country, and have seen a real old farmhouse, with a thatched roof, and moss, and plants growing wild upon it. There is a stork's nest on the ridge, for one cannot very well do without the stork; the walls are sloping, the windows low, and there is only one among them that is made to open; the baking-oven projects from the wall like a fat little body. The elder-tree hangs over the fence, and there is a little pool of water, with a duck and her ducklings, beneath some old willow-trees. There is also, of course, a dog that barks at everybody who passes by.

Just such an old farm-house stood out in the country, and there lived an old couple, a peasant and his wife. Little though they had, there was one thing they could not do without, and that was the horse, that found a living by grazing on the roadside.

Father rode on it to town, and the neighbors borrowed it, rendering services of some kind in return; but the old couple thought it might perhaps be better

“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”

for them to sell the horse or exchange it for something more useful.

“You will know best, father, what this something should be,” said the wife. “To-day is market-day in town; ride down there and sell the horse or make a good exchange. What you do is always right—so ride to the market.”

So she wrapped his muffler around him, for she could do this better than he, and tied it in a double knot, so that it looked very smart; then she brushed his hat with the palm of her hand, and gave him a hearty kiss. So he rode away on the horse that was about to be sold or exchanged. Yes; father knew what he was about!

The sun beat fiercely down, there were no clouds to be seen, and the road was very dusty. Many people were going to market, some in carts, some on horseback, and some on their own legs.

The heat was stifling, and there was no shade on the road.

A man came along, leading a cow—as pretty a cow as one could wish to see.

“She must give good milk, I am sure,” thought the peasant; “it would be a very good exchange to get her for the horse. Hullo there! you with the cow!” he cried, “let us have a little chat. Of course, a horse costs more than a cow, but I don’t mind that; I happen to have more use for the cow—shall we make an exchange?”

“All right,” said the man with the cow, and so they exchanged.

Now that the bargain was made, the peasant might have returned home, for he had finished his business; but, as he had made up his mind to go to market, he

“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”

thought he might as well do so, if only to see what was going on; so off he walked with his cow.

He walked quickly, and the cow walked quickly, and so they soon overtook a man who was leading a sheep. It was a fine sheep, in good condition, and with plenty of wool.

“Now, that is just the thing I should like to have,” thought the peasant. “There is plenty of grass for it by the roadside, and in the winter we could take it into the room with us. As a matter of fact, it would be more suitable for us to keep a sheep than a cow. Shall we exchange?” he said.

The man with the sheep was quite willing; so the exchange was made.

The peasant went along the road with his sheep, and at the stile he met a man with a big goose under his arm.

“That is a heavy bird you have there,” said the peasant, “with plenty of feather and fat. It would look capital tied with a piece of string by the pond. It would be something for the wife to save the potato peelings for. She has so often said: ‘If we only had a goose!’ and now she can get one, and she shall have it. Shall we exchange? I will give you the sheep for the goose, and thank you into the bargain,” said the peasant. The other man was quite willing; and so they exchanged, and the peasant got the goose.

He was now close to the town. The crowd on the road became greater, and there was a crush and a rush of men and cattle. They were walking on the road and by the roadside, and at the turnpike-gate they walked even in the toll-man’s potato field, where a hen was strutting about with a string tied to her leg, in order that she should not go astray in the crowd and so get

“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”

lost. It was a nice fat hen, it winked with one eye, and looked very artful. “Cluck! cluck!” it said; what it thought, when saying it, I do not know; but the peasant thought, as he saw the hen—

“Now, that is the nicest hen I have ever seen. She is finer than our parson’s hen. I should like to have her. A hen can always pick up something; she can almost keep herself. I think it would be a good exchange if I got her for the goose. Shall we exchange?” he said.

“Exchange!” said the other; “that wouldn’t be so bad.” So they exchanged: the toll-man got the goose, and the peasant got the hen.

He had done a good deal of business on his way to town; it was very hot, and he was very tired; he would be all the better for a drink and a piece of bread, and now he was at the inn.

He was going in, and the innkeeper was going out, so they met in the doorway.

The innkeeper carried a big sack of something.

“What have you there?” said the peasant.

“Rotten apples!” answered the man; “a whole sackful for the pigs.”

“Oh, that is a rare lot; I should like mother to see them. Last year we had only one single apple on the old tree by the peat-house; this apple we kept on the top of the cupboard until it cracked. ‘Well, it is always property,’ said mother; but here she could see any quantity of property; yes, I should like to show them to her.”

“Well, what will you give for them?” asked the man.

“What will I give? I’ll give my hen in exchange,” and so he gave his hen in exchange, got the apples, went

“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”

into the inn and up to the bar. He placed his sack with the apples against the stove; but the stove was heated, and he had not thought of this.

Many strangers were present in the room, horse-



dealers, ox-drivers, and two Englishmen, and Englishmen are so rich that their pockets bulge out with gold coins.

And they make bets, as you shall hear.

“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”

“Hiss! hiss!” What was that noise over there by the stove?

The apples were beginning to roast.

“What is it?”

Well, they soon heard the whole story—how the horse was exchanged for the cow, and so on, down to the rotten apples.

“Well, your good wife will give it to you when you get home,” said the Englishmen; “there will be a row.”

“Not at all,” said the peasant; “she will give me a kiss, instead of scolding me, and she will say: ‘What father does is always right.’”

“Shall we bet,” said the Englishman, “a barrel of gold coins—a hundred pounds to a hundredweight?”

“It is quite enough to make it a bushelful,” said the peasant; “I can only set the bushel of apples against it; but I will throw myself and the wife into the bargain, and that, I should say, is good measure!”

“Done!” they said; and so the bet was made.

The innkeeper’s carriage came up, and the Englishmen got in, the peasant got in, and the rotten apples got in, and away they all went to the peasant’s house.

“Good evening, mother!”

“Good evening, father!”

“I have made the exchange.”

“Well, you understand what you are about,” said the woman, and she embraced him, and forgot all about the sack and the strangers.

“I have exchanged the horse for a cow.”

“Oh, how nice to get milk!” said the wife; “now we can have butter and cheese on the table; that was indeed a capital exchange!”

“Yes, but I exchanged the cow for a sheep.”

“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”

“Well, that is perhaps better,” said the wife; “you always think of everything. We have just enough pasture for a sheep; ewe’s milk, and cheese, and woolen socks, and a woolen jacket—the cow cannot give these, and her hairs only come off. How you do think of everything, to be sure!”

“But the sheep I exchanged for a goose.”

“Are we really going to have roast goose for Christmas this year, father dear? You are always thinking of something to please me. This is a capital idea of yours; the goose can be tied to a string, and we will fatten her for Christmas!”

“But I exchanged the goose for a hen,” said the old man.

“A hen! oh, that was a good bargain!” said the woman; “a hen lays eggs, and hatches them, and so we can get chickens—a whole poultry-yard—and that’s the very thing I have always wished for.”

“Yes; but the hen I exchanged for a sack of rotten apples!”

“Now, I must really kiss you!” said the woman. “Thank you, thank you, my dear old man! Now I’ll tell you something; when you were gone, I thought I would make a nice meal for you—pancakes with onions. The eggs I had, but I had no onions, so I went over to the school-master’s—they have onions, I know, but the wife is mean, poor thing. I asked her to lend me some. ‘Lend!’ she said; ‘there is nothing that grows in our garden that I could lend you—not even a rotten apple.’ But now I can lend her ten, or a whole sackful—that is really nice, father,” and with this she gave him a sounding kiss.

“Well, that is capital!” exclaimed both Englishmen;

“WHAT FATHER DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT”

“always going downhill, and yet always cheerful; it is worth the money.” So they paid a hundredweight of gold to the peasant who was not scolded, but kissed.

Yes; it always pays when the wife sees and acknowledges that father knows best—that what he does is always right.

Now, that is my story. I heard it when I was a little boy, and now you have heard it too, and know that “what father does is always right.”





The Little Match Girl

IT was terribly cold; the snow was falling, and it began to grow dark, for the evening was coming on, and it was the last evening of the year—New Year's Eve. In the cold and darkness, a poor little girl, with bare head and naked feet, was walking along the street. She certainly had had slippers on when she left home, but of what use were they? They were large slippers—in fact, her mother had used them, so big were they; and the little girl had lost them when she ran across the street, for two big wagons came rattling by

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

at a terrible rate. One of the slippers she couldn't find; and a little boy ran about with the other, saying that it would make a capital cradle when he had children of his own. So now the child walked along with her little naked feet, which were red and blue with cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, holding one bundle in her hand. Nobody had bought anything of her the whole day long, nobody had given her a single penny. Shivering with cold and hunger, she crept along, looking oh! so miserable, poor little thing! The snowflakes fell upon her long fair hair, that hung in pretty curls around her neck, but she did not think of this now.

By-and-by all the windows were lit up, and in the street there was a delicious smell of roast goose; for it was New Year's Eve—yes, she remembered that. In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down, huddling herself together. She drew her little legs up under her; but she grew colder still, and she dared not go home: for she had sold no matches—had not earned a single penny. Her father would beat her, and, besides, it was cold at home: they had nothing over them but the roof, through which the wind came whistling, although the largest holes were filled up with straw and rags. Her little hands were nearly dead with cold.

Ah! a match might do her some good, if only she could draw one out of the bundle and rub it against the wall, just to warm her fingers. She drew one out. Fizz! how it sputtered and burned; there was a warm flame, just like a tiny candle, as she held her hands over it; it was a wonderful little light. It seemed to the little girl that she sat in front of a large open stove, with

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

polished brass feet and a brass cover. How beautifully the fire burned, and how warm it was! Ah! what was that?—the little one stretched out her tiny feet to warm them also; when suddenly the flame went out, the stove vanished, and she sat with the stump of a burnt match in her hand.

She struck a new one: it burned up, and as the light fell upon the wall, it became as transparent as a veil. She could see into a room where a table was spread with a white table-cloth, and upon it stood a fine dinner service. What a savory smell came from the roast goose, stuffed with dried plums and apples! But, even more delightful, the goose jumped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor with a knife and fork in its beak, straight towards the little girl. Then the match went out, and there was nothing to be seen but the cold thick wall.

She lit another match, and saw a most beautiful Christmas-tree, larger and more richly bedecked than that which she had seen through the glass door at the rich merchant's last Christmas. Thousands of candles were shining from its green branches, and many-colored pictures, just like those shown in the shop windows, looked down upon her. The little girl stretched out both her hands, but the match went out.

The flames of the many Christmas candles rose higher and higher, and she saw that they were now twinkling stars. One of them fell, and left behind it a long streak of fire in the sky. "Now someone is dying," said the little one. Her old Grandmother, who was the only person who had been kind to her, and who was now dead, had once said: "When a star falls, a soul goes up to God."

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

She struck another match against the wall. It lit up everything around, and in the brightness, quite clearly and distinctly, stood her old Grandmother, looking upon her mildly and lovingly.

"Grandmother," cried the little one, "take me with you! I know you will go when the match is burned out, and vanish like the warm stove, the delicious roast goose, and the big, beautiful Christmas-tree," and she hastily struck the whole bundle of matches, wishing to hold her Grandmother fast. The matches shone with a radiance brighter than daylight; Grandmother had never before seemed so grand and so beautiful. She lifted the little girl in her arms, and they floated upward in joy and happiness, high, so very high, where there was no cold, no hunger, no sorrow. They were with God. But in the corner by the house sat the little girl in the cold morning light, with red cheeks and smiling lips—dead, frozen to death on the last evening of the Old Year!

New Year's morning dawned over the little dead child. There she sat, in the stiffness of death, still holding the matches, of which one bundle was nearly burned.

"She wanted to warm herself," they said. But no one knew what beautiful things she had seen—with what glory she had gone with her Grandmother into the happiness of the New Year.



Little Claus and Big Claus

THERE lived two men in a village, and they had the same name—both were called Claus; but one had four horses, and the other only one. To distinguish them, they called the one who had four horses, Big Claus, and the one who had only one horse, Little Claus. Now we shall hear what happened to these two, for this is a true story.

The whole week through, Little Claus had to plow for Big Claus, and lend him his one horse; then Big Claus would help him in return, with his four horses, but only

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

once a week, and that was on the Sunday. Hurrah! how Little Claus cracked his whip over all the five horses, for on that one day they were as good as his own! The sun shone so brightly, and all the bells in the steeple were ringing to church; the people were dressed in their best, and went, with their hymn-books under their arms, to hear the parson preach. They looked at Little Claus, who was plowing with his five horses, and he was so pleased that he cracked his whip, and cried out: "Gee up, all my horses!"

"You must not say that," said Big Claus; "it is only the one horse that is yours." But as soon as anyone passed on the way to church, Little Claus forgot that he was not to say this, and again he cried: "Gee up, all my horses!"

"Now I must warn you not to say that again," said Big Claus, "for if you do, I shall hit your horse on the head, so that he will fall down dead on the spot, and there will be an end of him."

"No; I will not say it any more," said Little Claus. But when the people passed by, and nodded "good day" to him, he was so pleased, and he thought it looked so fine to have five horses to plow his field, that he cracked his whip, and again called out: "Gee up, all my horses!"

"I'll 'gee up' your horses!" said Big Claus, and he took a club, and hit Little Claus's only horse on the head, so that it fell down dead.

"Alas! now I have no horse at all," said Little Claus, and began to cry. Then he flayed the horse and took the hide, let it dry well in the wind, put it in a bag, which he hung over his shoulder, and went to town to sell the skin.

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

He had a long way to go, and had to pass through a great wood, and as the weather grew very bad, he lost his way altogether. Before he found it again, night began to fall, and it was too late either to go to the town, or to return home again, before dark.

Close by the road stood a large farmhouse; the shutters were closed outside the windows, but a light could still be seen, shining through at the top.

"I may be able to stay here overnight," thought Little Claus, and he knocked at the door.

The farmer's wife came to the door, but when she heard what he wanted, she told him to go away; her husband was not at home, and she could not receive any strangers.

"Well, I shall have to sleep outside," thought Little Claus, and the farmer's wife shut the door in his face.

Close by stood a large haystack, and between this and the house there was a little shed with a flat thatched roof.

"I can lie up there," said Little Claus, when he saw the roof; "that will be a nice bed; I hope the stork will not come down and bite my legs," for there was a real stork standing on the roof, where it had its nest.

Now, Little Claus crept up to the roof of the shed, where he lay down and made himself comfortable.

The window shutters did not close at the top, so he could see into the room. There was a large table, and the cloth was laid, and on it were wine, roast meat, and a fine fish. The farmer's wife and the sexton sat at the table, but nobody else; she was handing the food to him, and he was enjoying the fish, for this was a dish of which he was very fond.

"If only I could get some too," thought Little Claus,

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

and he craned his neck towards the window. Oh! what a splendid cake he could see standing there—it was a real feast!

All of a sudden he heard somebody riding along the high-road towards the house; it was the farmer coming home. The farmer was a good-natured fellow, but he had one peculiarity, and that was a great horror of sextons. The mere sight of a sexton was enough to drive him frantic with rage. And that was the reason why the sexton came to pay a visit to the farmer's wife when he knew that her husband was not at home; so the good wife gave him the finest dishes she had.

When they heard the husband coming, they were greatly alarmed, and the wife asked the sexton to hide himself in a big empty chest, which was standing in a corner. So he hid himself at once, for he knew that the husband had a great horror of sextons, and that the mere sight of a sexton was enough to drive him frantic with rage.

The wife quickly put the wine and all the dainty dishes into the oven, for if the husband had seen them, he would certainly have asked what the meaning of it all was.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Little Claus on the roof, when he saw all the dishes carried away.

"Is there anybody up there?" asked the farmer, and looked up to the place where Little Claus was lying. "Why are you lying there? You had better come with me into the house."

So Little Claus told him how he had lost his way, and asked permission to stay overnight.

"Yes, certainly," said the farmer; "but we must first have something to eat."

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

The farmer's wife received them both in a very friendly way, spread the cloth on the long table, and gave them a large dish of porridge. The farmer was hungry, and ate with good appetite, but Little Claus could not help thinking of the fine roast meat, the fish, and the cake, which he knew were standing in the oven.

He had put his bag, containing the horsehide, under the table at his feet, for, as we know, he had brought it from home, to sell it in the town.

He did not like the porridge, so he trod on the bag, and the dry skin inside crackled quite loudly.

"Be quiet!" said Little Claus to the sack; but he trod on it again, so that it crackled much louder than before.

"Hullo! what have you in your sack?" asked the farmer.

"Oh! it is a conjurer," said Little Claus. "He says that we oughtn't to eat porridge, for he has conjured the oven full of roast meat, fish, and cake."

"What do you mean?" said the farmer, and opened the oven-door in a hurry. There he saw the fine dishes which the wife had hidden away; but he thought, of course, that they came through the charms of the conjurer in the sack.

The woman dared not say anything, and at once put the dishes on the table; so they made a meal of the fish, the roast meat, and the cake.

Soon afterwards, Little Claus trod on the bag again, so that the hide crackled.

"What does he say now?" asked the farmer.

"He says," replied Little Claus, "that he has conjured three bottles of wine for us, and they also are standing in the oven!"

Then the wife had to take out the wine, which she had

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

hidden, and the farmer drank, and grew merry; he would greatly like, he thought, to possess such a conjurer as Little Claus had in his sack.

"Can he also call up the Evil One himself?" said the farmer. "I should like to see him, for I am now in a merry mood."

"Oh, yes," said Little Claus; "my conjurer can do anything that I ask. Is it not so?" he asked, and trod on the sack, so that it crackled. "Do you hear him say 'Yes'? But the Evil One is very ugly to look at, so we had better not see him!"

"Oh! I am not at all afraid," said the farmer; "I wonder what he is like."

"Well, he will probably appear in the shape of a sexton."

"Ugh!" exclaimed the farmer, "that is dreadful, for I cannot bear the sight of a sexton; but never mind, as long as I know that it is the Evil One, I shall try to put up with it; now I have courage, but don't let him come too near me!"

"Well, I will now ask my conjurer," said Little Claus, who trod on the sack, bent down, and pretended to listen.

"What does he say?"

"He says that you may go over and open the chest that is standing in the corner; you will then see the Evil One crouching down, but you must hold the lid so that he doesn't slip out."

"Will you help me to hold it?" said the farmer, and went up to the chest where his wife had hidden the real sexton, who was sitting inside terribly frightened.

The farmer opened the lid a little, and peeped into the chest.

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

"Ugh!" he cried, and sprang backwards. "Well, now I have seen him—he was exactly like the sexton at our church. Oh! how dreadful!"

After this they drank together, and so they sat drinking, until late into the night.

"You must sell me that conjurer," said the farmer; "you may ask me anything you like; I will give you a whole bushel of money."

"No, I cannot take it," said Little Claus; "just think how useful he is to me."

"But I should so very much like to have him," said the farmer, and he went on begging.

"Well," said Little Claus at last, "as you have been so kind as to shelter me for the night, I will do as you wish. You shall have the conjurer for a bushel of money, but you must fill the bushel up to the top."

"You shall have it," said the farmer; "but as for that chest over there, you must take it away with you—I will not have it another hour in my house. For all we can tell, he may be there still."

Little Claus gave the farmer the sack containing the dried hide, and received in return a bushel brimful of money. And the farmer gave him into the bargain a large wheelbarrow, to carry off his money and the chest.

"Good-by," said Little Claus; and so he went off with his money and the big chest, in which the sexton was still sitting.

On the far side of the forest was a wide and deep river; the water was running so rapidly that one could scarcely swim against the stream. They had built a fine new bridge over it.

Little Claus stopped at the middle of the bridge, and

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

said quite loudly, so that the sexton in the chest should hear: "Now, what am I to do with this stupid chest? It is as heavy as if there were stones in it; I am getting quite tired of carrying it any farther so I'll just throw it into the river. If it drifts down to my place, so much the better; if not, it doesn't matter. So he took hold of the chest with one hand, and lifted it a little as if he were going to throw it into the water.

"No, don't!" cried the sexton inside; "please let me out!"

"Ugh!" exclaimed Little Claus, pretending to be frightened. "So he is still inside! I had better throw it into the river, so as to drown him!"

"Oh! no! no!" cried the sexton; "I will give you a whole bushel of money if you will let me go!"

"Ah! that's a different thing," said Little Claus, and opened the chest. The sexton at once crept out, pushed the empty chest into the river, and went home, where he gave Little Claus a whole bushel of money. As he had one bushel before, his wheelbarrow was now quite full of money!

"Well, I am very well paid for that horse," he said to himself, when he came home to his own place, and turned out all the money in a large heap on the floor. "How angry Big Claus will be when he learns how rich I have become through that one horse of mine. But of course I shall not tell him anything about it."

Then he sent a man to Big Claus, to borrow a bushel measure.

"What can he want with it?" thought Big Claus; and he smeared some tar on the bottom of the bushel, so that a little of whatever was measured would stick to it.

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

And this did indeed happen, for when the bushel came back, there were three new sixpenny-pieces at the bottom of it.

“What is this?” said Big Claus, and ran off at once



to Little Claus. “Where did you get all this money from?”

“Oh! I got it for my horse’s skin, which I sold last night.”

“That is a very good price,” said Big Claus. So he ran home, seized an ax, and killed all his four horses, took the skins off them, and drove into the town.

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

"Hides! hides! Who will buy hides?" he cried through the streets.

All the shoemakers and tanners came running up to him, and asked him his price.

"A bushel of money for each," said Big Claus.

"Are you mad?" they all said. "Do you think we have money by the bushel?"

"Hides! hides! Who will buy hides?" he cried again, but to all who asked what the hides would cost, he replied: "A bushel of money."

"He wants to make fools of us," they all said, and the shoemakers took their straps, and the tanners their leathern aprons, and they began to beat Big Claus.

"Hides! hides!" they jeered at him. "We will tan your hide for you, till the red broth runs out of it. Out of the town with him!" And Big Claus had to run as fast as he could, for he had never had such a thrashing before.

"Well," he said, when he came home, "Little Claus shall pay for this. I will kill him."

Now, Little Claus's old grandmother had just died. She had always been very harsh and unkind to him, but nevertheless, he was very sorry, and he took the dead woman and laid her in his own warm bed, to see if she would not come to life again. She could lie there all night, he thought, for he would sit in a corner and sleep on a chair, which he had done before.

As he was sitting there in the night, the door opened, and Big Claus came in with his ax. He knew quite well where Little Claus's bed was; so he went straight up to it, and hit the dead grandmother on the head, thinking that she was Little Claus.

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

"Now," he said, "you cannot make a fool of me again!" and then he went back home.

"He is a bad, wicked man," said Little Claus; "he wanted to kill me. It was a good thing for my old grandmother that she was already dead, or else he would have killed her."

He then dressed the old grandmother in her Sunday clothes, borrowed a horse from his neighbor, harnessed it to a cart, and propped up the old grandmother on the back seat, so that she could not fall out when the cart moved; and so they drove through the wood.

When the sun rose, they were outside a large inn.

Here Little Claus stopped, and went in to get something to eat.

The inn-keeper had a great deal of money; he was also a good-natured fellow, but exceedingly hot-tempered, as if he had pepper and tobacco inside him.

"Good morning," he said to Little Claus. "You have your Sunday clothes on early to-day."

"Yes," said Little Claus; "I am going to town with my old grandmother. She is sitting outside in the cart. I cannot get her to come inside, so will you please take a glass of beer out to her? But you must speak very loudly, because she is a little hard of hearing."

"All right," said the inn-keeper. So he poured out a large glass of beer, and with this he went out to the dead grandmother, who was sitting up in the cart.

"Here is a glass of beer from your grandson," said the inn-keeper; but the dead old woman said not a word, and sat quite still.

"Don't you hear?" cried the inn-keeper, as loudly as he could; "here is a glass of beer from your grandson!" Once more he shouted, and yet again, but as the grand-

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

mother did not even move on the seat, he at last got angry, and threw the glass right in her face, so that the beer ran down over her nose, and she fell back into the cart, for she had only been propped up, and not fastened.

"Hullo!" cried Little Claus, running out at the door; and he seized hold of the inn-keeper. "You have killed my grandmother! See, there is a big wound on her forehead!"

"Oh! this is indeed a misfortune!" cried the host, wringing his hands; "it all comes of my hot temper. Dear Little Claus, I will give you a whole bushel of money, and have your grandmother buried as if she were my own, if only you will say nothing about it; or I shall have my head cut off, and that would be too dreadful!"

So Little Claus received a bushel of money, and the inn-keeper buried the old grandmother as if she had been his own.

When Little Claus came home again with this heap of money, he at once sent a man over to Big Claus, to ask him if he could lend him a bushel measure.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Big Claus; "I thought I had killed him! I must really see to this myself." So he went over to Little Claus with the bushel. "Where did you get all this money from?" he asked, opening his eyes wide, when he saw all the new money that had arrived.

"It was my grandmother, and not me, that you killed," said Little Claus; "now I have sold her, and got a bushel of money for her."

"That was a very good price," said Big Claus; and hurried back home, took his ax, and killed his own

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

grandmother, put her in a cart, drove to town, where the druggist lived, and asked him if he would like to buy a dead person.

"Who is he, and where did you get him from?" asked the druggist.

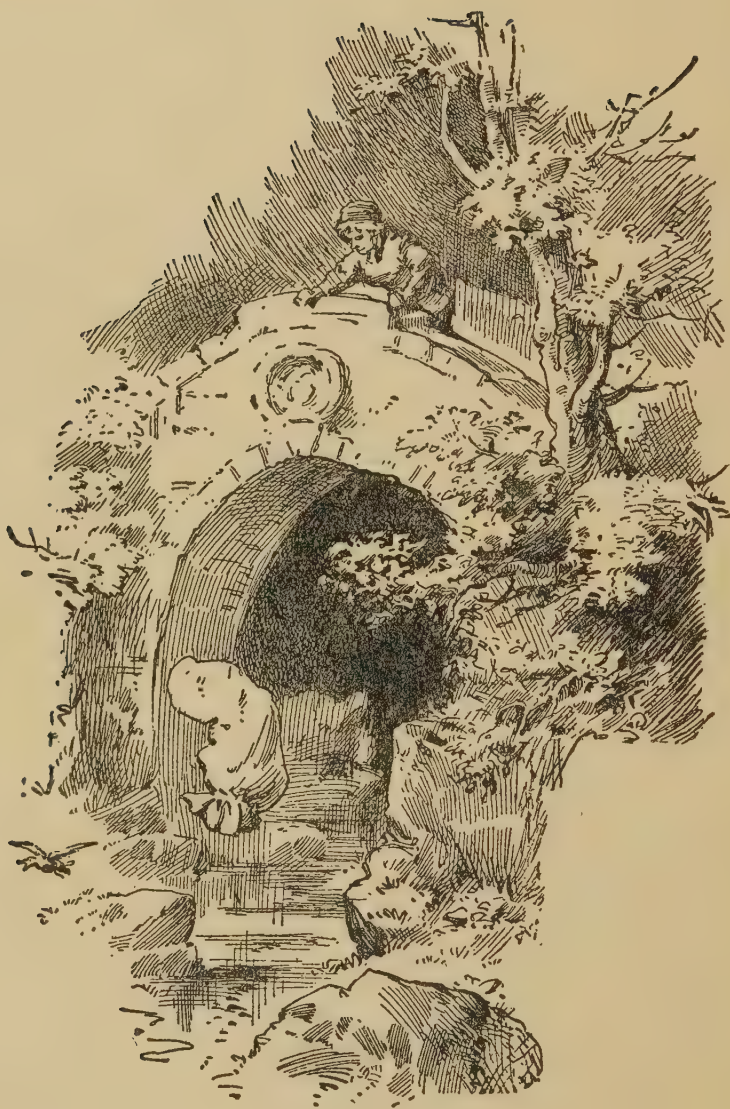
"It is my grandmother," said Big Claus; "I have killed her to get a bushel of money for her."

"Heaven save us!" said the druggist; "you are raving! But don't talk such nonsense, or you may lose your head," and he told him earnestly what a wicked deed he had done, what a wicked man he was, and that he ought to be punished; so that Big Claus got so frightened that he ran straight out of the druggist's, sprang into his cart, whipped up the horses, and drove home.

But the druggist and all the people thought he was mad, and let him drive wherever he liked.

"I shall pay you for this!" said Big Claus, as he drove along the road; "I shall pay you for this, Little Claus!" As soon as he came home, he took the biggest sack he could find, went over to Little Claus, and said: "Now you have fooled me once more! First I killed my horses, and then my old grandmother; it is all your fault, but you shall never play a trick on me again," and he seized Little Claus round the waist, put him in the sack, lifted it on to his back, and said: "Now I am going to drown you!"

It was a good long way before they came to the river, and Little Claus was not very light to carry. The road led past the church; the organ was playing, and the people were singing beautifully; so Big Claus put down the sack, with Little Claus in it, by the church door, and thought it might be as well for him to go inside



LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

and hear a psalm before he went farther. Little Claus would not be able to get out, and all the people were at church, so in he went.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Little Claus inside the sack, and he twisted, and turned, but it was impossible for him to undo the string.

Just then there came along an old drover with snow-white hair, carrying a big stick in his hand. He was driving a whole herd of oxen; and they ran up against the sack in which Little Claus was sitting, and overturned it.

"Oh, dear," sighed Little Claus; "I am so very young, to be going to Heaven."

"And I, poor thing," said the ox-driver, "I am so old, and have not got there yet."

"Open the sack," cried Little Claus, "and creep into it in my place; you will then go to Heaven at once."

"Well, I should very much like to, indeed," said the drover, and opened the sack for Little Claus, who at once jumped out.

"Please to take care of the cattle," said the old man, and crept into the sack, which Little Claus tied up.

Then he went off with all the cows and oxen.

A little while afterwards, Big Claus came out of the church, and threw the sack again over his shoulder. It seemed to him that it had become much lighter, which was only natural, for the old drover was only half as heavy as Little Claus.

"How light he seems now: that must be because I have heard a psalm." So he went to the river, which was deep and wide, threw the sack with the old drover into the water, and called out after him, believing, of

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

course, that he was Little Claus: "Now you cannot play me any more tricks!"

Then he went towards home, but when he came to the crossing of the roads, he met Little Claus, who was driving the cattle.

"What is this?" cried Big Claus; "have I not drowned you?"

"Yes," said Little Claus; "you threw me into the river half an hour ago."

"But where did you get all these fine cattle from?" asked Big Claus.

"They are sea-cattle," said Little Claus. "I will tell you the whole story; but first I thank you very much for having drowned me, for now that I have come up again, I am quite rich. I was very much frightened when I lay in the sack, and the wind whistled about my ears when you threw me down from the bridge into the cold water. I sank at once to the bottom, but I did not hurt myself, for down there grows the most beautiful soft grass. I fell on this, and at once the sack opened: a beautiful maiden in a shining white robe, and with a green wreath on her wet hair, took me by the hand, and said: 'Is that you, Little Claus? Here you have some cattle to begin with, and a mile farther up the road is another herd, which I will give you.' Now, I found out that the river was the high-road for the sea-folk. On the bed of the stream they can walk and drive all the way from the sea, straight into the land, as far as the river-source. It is very pretty down there, with flowers and the freshest grass; the fish that were swimming in the water darted past me just like the birds in the air. The people are charming, and what beautiful cattle are there, grazing by the roadside and in the pastures!"

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

"But why did you come back here so soon?" asked Big Claus. "I would not have done that if it was so beautiful down there."

"Oh!" said Little Claus; "I was very artful about that. You remember, as I said, the mermaid told me that a mile up the road—and by the road she means the river, for she does not know of anything else—there was a whole herd of cattle for me. But, of course, the river makes several bends, now here, now there—it is a long way round, and if you can make the way shorter it is all the better; that is why I've come up on land, for by crossing over from one end of the river to the other, I save nearly half a mile, and reach my sea-cattle all the sooner!"

"Oh, you are a lucky fellow," said Big Claus. "Do you think that I could get sea-cattle, too, if I went down to the bottom of the river?"

"Well, I should think so," said Little Claus; "but I cannot carry you in the sack, for you are too heavy. You must go down there yourself, and creep into the sack; then I will throw you in, with the greatest pleasure."

"Thank you very much," said Big Claus; "but if I do not get any sea-cattle when I get down there, I shall give you a thrashing—of that you may be sure!"

"Oh, no; don't be so cruel!" said Little Claus; and so they went down to the river.

When the cattle, which were thirsty, saw the river, they ran as fast as they could to the water to drink.

"See how they hurry!" said Little Claus; "they long to get down to the bottom of the river again."

"Yes, but help me first," said Big Claus, "or I will thrash you"; and he crept into a big sack which had

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS

been lying on the back of one of the oxen. "Put a stone in, or else I fear I may not sink," said Big Claus.

"All right," said Little Claus, and he put a big stone in the sack, tied the string tightly, and pushed him over.

Splash! went Big Claus into the river, and sank at once to the bottom.

"I am afraid he will never find the cattle," said Little Claus; and then he drove home with his own herd.





The Snow Man

I AM positively crackling, it is so beautifully cold," said the Snow Man. "The wind is enough to blow life into one, and how the shining one up there is staring at me!" He meant the sun, which was just setting. "It shall not make me wink: I will keep my eyes wide open."

His eyes were made of two large triangular pieces of

THE SNOW MAN

tile; his mouth was a part of an old rake, and he was therefore provided with teeth.

He had been born amidst the cheers of the boys, and welcomed by the sound of sleigh-bells and the cracking of whips.

The sun set; the full moon rose, round and large, clear and beautiful, in the blue sky.

"There it is again on the other side," said the Snow Man. He thought it was the sun, that had appeared once more. "I have cured it of staring! Now it may hang up there and shine so that I can see myself. If only I knew how to move! I should like to get down on to the ice and slide, as I have seen the boys do, but I don't quite know how to run."

"Bow! wow!" barked the old Yard Dog. He was a little hoarse; he had been hoarse, in fact, ever since he was an indoor dog and lay under the stove. "The sun will soon teach you to run! It taught your predecessor to run last year, and his predecessor too. Bow! wow! they are both gone."

"I don't understand what you mean, fellow!" said the Snow Man. "Is that thing yonder going to teach me to run?" He meant the moon. "Well, it ran away itself just now, when I was staring at it, and now it is creeping up from the other side."

"You don't know anything," said the Yard Dog; but then you have only lately been built up. The one you can see now is called the moon; the one that just went down is the sun, and it is coming back again to-morrow, and will teach you to run down into the moat. The weather is about to change; I can feel it in my left hind leg, which is aching. Yes, the weather is undoubtedly going to change."

THE SNOW MAN

"I don't understand him," said the Snow Man, "but I have a foreboding that what he is saying is very disagreeable. The one which he calls the sun, that was staring at me, and that disappeared, is no friend of mine either, I am sure of that."

"Bow! wow!" barked the Yard Dog, as he walked three times round himself and then lay down in his kennel to sleep.

There came, in fact, a change in the weather. Towards morning a thick damp fog covered the whole country around. At dawn a breeze sprang up; the wind was cold as ice, and the frost got a strong grip of the earth.

What a sight it was to see the sun rise! All the trees and bushes were white with hoar-frost; it looked like a whole forest of white coral, all the branches covered with glittering white blossoms. The multitude of fine twigs which are hidden in summer by the leaves could now be seen quite distinctly; they formed a lacework so brilliant that it seemed as if a dazzling light were radiating from every branch. The birch waving in the wind was as full of life as the trees in the summer-time.

It was incomparably beautiful! and when the sun shone, the whole scene glittered as if it were powdered all over with diamond dust. It seemed as if great diamonds were sparkling on the snowy carpet, or that countless little lights were burning, far whiter than the white snow itself.

"It is wonderfully beautiful," said the young girl, who came with a young man into the garden. They stood just beside the Snow Man and admired the brilliant landscape. "Even the summer can show no prettier sight," she said, her eyes sparkling.

THE SNOW MAN

"Nor can it show such a fellow as that," said her companion, pointing to the Snow Man. "He is capital!"

The young girl smiled, nodded to the Snow Man, and danced along with her friend over the snow, that crackled as if they were walking on starch.

"Who were those two?" asked the Snow Man of the



Yard Dog; "you are an older resident than I am—do you know them?"

"Of couse I do," said the Yard Dog. "She has patted me, and he has given me a bone; I am not going to bite *them*."

"But what are they?" asked the Snow Man.

"They are lovers," replied the Yard Dog. "They

THE SNOW MAN

are going to move into the same kennel and gnaw bones together. Bow! wow!”

“Are these two as important as you and I?” asked the Snow Man.

“Why, they live in the house!” said the Yard Dog. “Those who were only born yesterday have certainly a deal to learn. I notice that in you; *I* have age and knowledge: I know all of them here in the house. There was a time when I did not stand here in the cold, fastened to a chain. Bow! wow!”

“The cold is delightful,” said the Snow Man. “Do tell me about it; but you must not clank with your chain, for it jars right through me.”

“Bow! wow!” barked the Yard Dog. “I was a puppy once—a pretty little thing, they said. I used to lie in the house on a chair covered with velvet, or in the lap of the mistress. I was kissed on the nose, my paws were wiped with an embroidered handkerchief, and they used to call me a ‘dear, sweet, little pet.’ But after a time I grew too big for them, so they gave me to the housekeeper.

“I went to live in the basement; from where you stand, you can look into the room where I was master, for I was quite the master at the housekeeper’s. It was certainly a poorer place than upstairs, but it was much more pleasant; for at least, I was no longer squeezed and pulled about by the children. I had just as good food as before, and much more of it; I had my own cushion, and there was a stove; and at this time of the year that is the finest thing in the world. I used to creep in under the stove so that nobody could see me. Ah! I still dream of that stove! Bow! wow!”

THE SNOW MAN

"Does a stove look so very nice?" asked the Snow Man; "is it anything like me?"

"It is just the reverse of you," said the Yard Dog; "it is coal-black, and has a long neck, and a brass top. It eats firewood so that the fire spurts out of its mouth. If you nestle beside it, or close under it, it is most comfortable. You can surely see it through the window from where you stand."

The Snow Man looked, and saw a black, polished thing with a brass top. The fire shone out from the lower part. The Snow Man felt quite strange; it was a sensation that he could not explain, a kind of feeling that he did not understand, but which all people who are not snow men can appreciate.

"Then why did you leave her?" said the Snow Man; he felt that it must have been one of the gentler sex. "What caused you to give up such a place?"

"I was obliged to," replied the Yard Dog; "they pushed me outside and chained me up here. I had bitten the youngest son in the leg, because he kicked away the bone I was gnawing. 'Bone for bone,' I thought, but *they* took it differently; and since then I have been chained up, and my voice has lost its quality; listen how hoarse I am—bow! wow!—and that was the end of it."

The Snow Man was not listening; he was looking steadily down into the housekeeper's basement—into the room where the stove was standing on its four iron legs; it appeared to be about as large as the Snow Man himself.

"I am crackling quite strangely," said he; "shall I ever get in there? It is a harmless wish, and our harmless wishes are most likely to be fulfilled. It is my

THE SNOW MAN

dearest wish, my only wish, and it would be very wrong if it was not fulfilled! I must get in there, I must lean against her, even if I have to break the window."

"You will never get in there," said the Yard Dog,



"and even if you got in you would soon disappear. Bow! wow!"

"I am as good as gone," said the Snow Man; "I think I am breaking up."

The whole day the Snow Man stood looking through the window, and at dusk the room appeared still more

THE SNOW MAN

inviting. From the stove came a gentle glow, not like moonshine, or sunshine—no, such a light as gleams only from a stove that has something inside.

Whenever the door was opened the flames darted out—this was a way the stove had—and threw a bright light upon the Snow Man's white face, and upon his body.

"I can stand it no longer," he said; "how beautiful she looks when she puts out her tongue!"

The night was very long, but it did not appear so to the Snow Man; for he stood lost in his own charming reflections, and they were freezing so that he actually crackled.

In the morning the window-panes of the basement were frozen—covered with ice-flowers as beautiful as any Snow Man could desire; but they quite concealed the stove, for the window-panes would not thaw.

The Snow Man could not see the stove; it crackled and jarred within him; indeed, it was just the kind of frosty weather that a Snow Man should enjoy, but he did not enjoy it. He ought to have felt quite happy, but he was not happy at all—he was "*stove sick*."

"That is a terrible disease for a Snow Man," said the Yard Dog; "I also have suffered from that complaint, but I have now recovered. Bow! wow! we shall have a change in the weather."

And the weather did change; it began to thaw, the air became warmer, and the Snow Man decreased in size.

He said nothing, he did not complain, and that is a sure sign.

One morning he tumbled over.

There was something like the handle of a broom

THE SNOW MAN

sticking up from where he had been standing, round which the children had built him up.

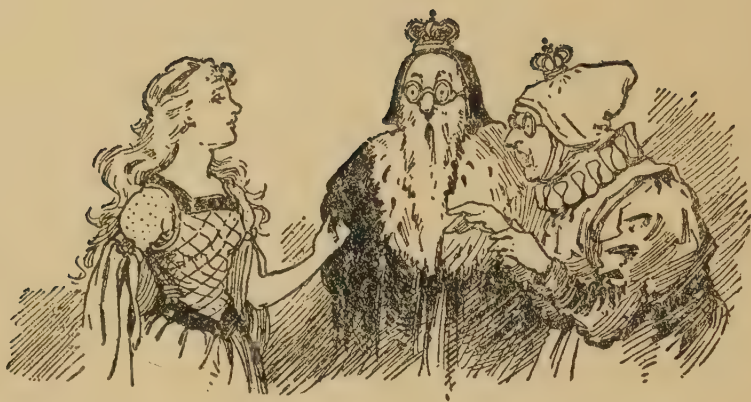
"Ah, now I understand his great longing for the stove," said the Yard Dog; "the Snow Man has had a stove-rake in his body, and that is what caused his emotion; but now it is all over—bow! wow!"

And soon the winter was over as well.

"Bow! wow!" barked the Yard Dog; but the little girls in the house sang:—

"Shoot forth, you fresh and fragrant thyme,
Show, willow-tree, your woolen glove,
Come, cuckoo, lark, and gentle dove,
For we are now in sweet spring-time.
Shine, kindly sun, while I sing to you,
And echo answers: 'Cuckoo! cuckoo!'"

And nobody thought of the Snow Man.



The Princess and the Pea

THERE was once a Prince who wanted to marry a Princess; but she must be a *real* Princess.

So he traveled round the world to find one, but there was always some difficulty. There were plenty of Princesses, if only he could have been quite certain that they were real Princesses; there was always something that did not seem quite right. And so he came home again, in a very sorrowful mood, for he greatly wished to marry a real Princess.

One evening, a terrible storm occurred. There was thunder and lightning, and the rain poured in torrents; it was indeed a terrible storm. There came a knock at the town gate, and the old King went out to open it.

Outside stood a Princess!

But alas! how roughly the storm had treated her! The water streamed down from her hair and clothes, and ran in through the tips of her shoes and out through the heels; but she said that she was a real Princess.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

"Well, we shall soon be able to find out," thought the old Queen. She did not say anything, but went into the bedroom, took all the bedding out of the bed, and put a parched pea at the bottom; then she put twenty mattresses on the top of the pea, and twenty eider-down quilts on top of the mattresses. And the Princess was to sleep there that night.

In the morning they asked her how she had slept.

"Oh! very badly indeed," said the Princess. "I have scarcely been able to shut my eyes the whole night! Goodness knows what there was in the bed! I have been lying on something hard, so that I am black and blue all over; it is quite dreadful!"

Now they were certain that she was a real Princess, for she had felt the pea through twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down quilts; no one but a real Princess could be so delicate. So the Prince took her for his wife, for he knew that at last he had found a real Princess. And the pea was put in the Art Museum; and there it is now, if nobody has taken it away.

This is a true story.



The Daisy

NOW you shall hear! Out in the country, close by the roadside, lay a villa residence; you must have seen it once yourself.

In front of it was a little garden, with flowers, and a fence, which was painted. Close by, in the ditch, in the midst of the most beautiful green grass, grew a little Daisy. The sun shone just as warmly and brightly upon it as upon the grandest flowers in the garden; and so it grew from hour to hour. One morning it stood in full bloom, with its tiny, bright, shining petals, like rays round the little yellow sun in the middle. It did not occur to the Daisy that nobody would see it there in the grass, and that it was a poor despised wildflower; no, it was very merry, and turned towards the warm sun, looked up at it, and listened to the Lark singing in the sky.

The little Daisy was as happy as if the day had been a holiday, and yet it was only Monday. All the children were at school; and while they were sitting on their benches, learning, the Daisy sat on its little green stalk and learned also, from the warm sun, and from everything around, how good God is. It seemed to the Daisy that the things which it could only dumbly feel were sung so clearly and prettily by the little Lark, that it looked up with a kind of respect to the happy bird, who could both sing and fly. The Daisy did

THE DAISY

not repine, however, that it could do neither of these things.

"I can see and hear it," thought the Daisy; the sun shines upon me, and the wind kisses me. Oh! how richly have I been endowed!"



Inside the fence stood many stiff, aristocratic flowers; the less scent they had the more conceited they were. The peonies blew themselves out so as to look larger than the roses, but mere size is not sufficient! The tulips possessed the most beautiful colors, and they were well aware of this, holding themselves bolt upright so

THE DAISY

as to attract attention. They did not notice the little Daisy outside, but the Daisy looked at them all the more, and thought how rich and beautiful they were.

"That beautiful bird must often come to visit them," thought the Daisy. "I am very glad that I am so near them, for then I can enjoy the sight of their splendor!" And at the very moment when this thought occurred to it—"Tweet!" down flew the Lark, but not to the peonies and tulips; no, down into the grass to the poor little Daisy, which was so much overjoyed that it could scarcely collect its thoughts.

The little bird was hopping around it, and singing: "Oh! how soft the grass is! and see, what a sweet little flower, with gold in its heart and silver on its dress."

The little yellow center in the daisy looked like gold, and the small petals around it were shining white. No one could imagine how happy the little Daisy was! The Lark kissed it with its beak, sang for it, and flew up again into the blue sky. It was at least a quarter of an hour before the little flower could recover itself. Quite modestly, but with joy in its heart, it looked at the flowers in the garden; they had seen the honor and happiness that had been bestowed upon it: they would understand its joy. But the tulips were standing just as stiff as before; they were quite sharp in the face, and very red, for they were angry. The peonies were very stupid, and it was a good thing that they were unable to speak, for they would have given the Daisy a good scolding. The poor little flower could see that they were not in a good humor, and it felt quite pained.

Just then, a young girl came into the garden, with a sharp and glittering knife. She went straight up to the tulips, and cut off one after the other.

THE DAISY

"Oh," sighed the little Daisy, "this is dreadful; now it is all over with them!"

And when the young girl went away with the tulips, the Daisy was glad that it grew out in the grass, and was only a poor little wildflower. It felt very thankful; and when the sun went down it folded its little petals, fell asleep, and dreamed the whole night long of the sun and the little birds.

The next morning, when the little flower again stretched out its tiny white petals, like little arms, towards the air and light, it recognized the Lark's voice, but its song was very sad. The poor little thing had good reason to be mournful, for it had been caught, and now it sat in a cage close by the open window. It sang of the joy of free, unfettered flight, sang of the young green corn in the fields, and of the beautiful journeys it used to make on its wings high up in the air. The little bird was sad at heart, as it sat there, a prisoner in its cage.

The little Daisy greatly wished to help it. But what could it do?—that was a difficult question. It forgot how pretty everything was, how warmly the sun shone, how beautiful were its own white petals. Ah! it could only think of the poor imprisoned bird, which it was unable to help.

Just then, two little boys came out of the garden, one of them carrying a knife as big and sharp as that with which the girl had cut off the tulips.

They went straight up to the little Daisy, which could not make out what they wanted.

"Here we can get a beautiful piece of turf for the Lark," said one of the boys, and began to cut a square round the Daisy, leaving it standing in the middle.

THE DAISY

"Tear off the flower," said the other boy; and the Daisy trembled with fear, for to be torn off was to lose its life, and *now* it wanted particularly to live, as it was to be put with the piece of turf in the cage of the imprisoned Lark.

"No, let it remain," said the other boy, "it looks so pretty"; so it was not disturbed, but was put into the



Lark's cage. But the poor bird complained loudly over its loss of liberty, and flapped its wings against the wires.

The little Daisy could not speak, nor say a word of comfort, though it would greatly have liked to; and thus the whole morning passed.

"There is no water here!" said the captive Lark; "they have all gone out and forgotten to give me any-

THE DAISY

thing to drink! My throat is dry and burning; it is like fire and ice within me, and the air is so heavy! Oh! I must die—leave the warm sunshine, the fresh green fields, and all the beautiful things that God has created!”

And it thrust its little beak down into the cool turf to refresh itself. Then its eyes fell on the Daisy, and the bird nodded to it, and kissed it with its beak, and said—

“You also must wither here, poor little wildflower! You, and the little piece of grass turf, are all they have given me, instead of the whole world which was mine out there! Every little blade of grass shall be to me a green tree, every one of your white petals a fragrant flower. Ah! how keenly you remind me of all I have lost!”

“If only I could comfort him,” thought the Daisy; but it could not move a leaf, although the scent that streamed forth from its delicate leaves was now far stronger than is usual in the daisy. The bird noticed this, and, although it was fainting with thirst, and in its pain tore off the green blades of grass, it did not touch the little wildflower.

Evening came, and no one brought the poor little bird a drop of water.

It stretched out its pretty delicate wings, its song became a mournful chirp, its little head bent towards the wildflower, and its heart broke with want and grief.

The little Daisy could not, as on the previous evening, fold its petals together and sleep; it drooped, ill and full of sorrow, to the earth.

Not until the next morning did the boys come; and when they found that the little bird was dead, they shed

THE DAISY

many tears, and dug it a pretty little grave, which they adorned with flower petals. They put the dead bird in a beautiful box, for it was to have a royal funeral, poor thing!

While it lived and sang they forgot it—shut it in a cage and allowed it to die of want; now it received great honor and the tribute of many tears.

But the piece of turf grass with the Daisy was thrown out on to the dusty road.

No one thought of it, although it had felt more sorrow than any for the little bird, and had so greatly wished to comfort it.



The Flying Trunk

THERE was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street with gold. But he did not do so; he knew the value of money better than to use it in this way. So clever was he that every shilling he put out brought him a crown; and so he continued till he died. His son inherited his wealth, and he lived a merry life with it: made kites out of five-pound notes, and threw pieces of gold into the sea instead of stones, making ducks and drakes of them. In this manner he soon lost all his money. At last he had nothing left but a pair of slippers, an old dressing-gown, and four shillings. And now all his friends deserted him; but one of them, who was very good-natured, sent him an old trunk with this message: "Pack up!" "Yes," he said, "it is all very well to say 'Pack up'"; but he had nothing left to pack up, therefore he seated himself in the trunk. It was a very wonderful trunk: no sooner did any one press on the lock than the trunk could fly. He shut the lid and pressed the lock, when away flew the trunk up the chimney with the merchant's son in it. Whenever the bottom of the trunk cracked he was in a great fright. However, he got safely in his trunk to the land of Turkey. He hid the trunk in the wood under some dry leaves, and then went into the town; he could do this very well, for the Turks always go about dressed

THE FLYING TRUNK

in dressing-gowns and slippers, as he was himself. He happened to meet a nurse with a little child. "I say, you, Turkish nurse," cried he, "what castle is that near the town?"

"The King's daughter lives there," she replied; "it has been prophesied that she will be very unhappy about a lover, and therefore no one is allowed to visit her unless the King and Queen are present."



"Thank you," said the merchant's son. So he went back to the wood, seated himself in his trunk, flew up to the roof of the castle, and crept through the window into the Princess's room. She lay on the sofa asleep; when she awoke she was very much frightened, but he told her he was a Turkish angel, who had come down through the air to see her. He sat down by her side and talked to her, and told her delightful stories; and when he asked the Princess if she would marry him she consented immediately.

"But you must come on Saturday," she said; for then the King and Queen will take tea with me. They will

THE FLYING TRUNK

be very proud when they find that I am going to marry a Turkish angel; but you must think of some very pretty stories to tell them, for my parents like to hear stories better than anything. My mother prefers one that is deep and moral; but my father likes something funny, to make him laugh."

"Very well," he replied; "I shall bring you no other marriage portion than a story," and so they parted.

Then he flew away to the town and bought a new dressing-gown, and afterwards returned to the wood, where he composed a story, so as to be ready by Saturday. It was ready, however, when he went to see the Princess. The King and Queen, and the whole court, were at tea with the Princess; and he was received with great politeness.

"Will you tell us a story?" said the Queen; "one that is instructive and full of deep learning."

"Yes, but with something in it to laugh at," said the King.

"Certainly," he replied, and commenced at once. "There was once a bundle of matches that were exceedingly proud of their high descent. Their genealogical tree—that is, a large pine-tree from which they had been cut—was at one time a large old tree in the wood. The matches now lay between a tinder-box and an old iron saucepan, and were talking about their youthful days. 'Ah! then we grew on the green boughs, and were as green as they. We knew that we were rich, for the other trees only wore their green dress in summer, but our family were able to array themselves in green, summer and winter. But the wood-cutter came, and our family fell under the ax. The head of the house obtained a situation as mainmast in a very fine

THE FLYING TRUNK

ship. The other branches of the family were taken to different places, and our office now is to kindle a light for common people.'

" 'Mine has been a very different fate,' said the iron pot, which stood by the matches; 'from my first entrance into the world I have been used to cooking and scouring. I am the first in this house when anything solid or useful is required. My only pleasure is to be made clean and shining after dinner, and to sit in my place and have a little sensible conversation with my neighbors. All of us, excepting the water-bucket, which is sometimes taken to the court-yard, live here together within these four walls. We get our news from the market-basket.'

" 'You are talking too much,' said the tinder-box; and the steel struck against the flint till some sparks flew out, crying, 'We want a merry evening, don't we?'

" 'Yes, of course,' said the matches; 'let us talk of those who are the highest born.'

" 'No, I don't like to be always talking of what we are,' remarked the saucepan; 'let us think of some other amusement; I will begin. We will tell something that has happened to ourselves. On the Baltic Sea, near the Danish shore——'

" 'What a pretty commencement!' said the plates; 'we shall like that story.'

" 'Yes; well, in my youth I lived in a quiet family, where the furniture was polished, the floors scoured, and clean curtains put up every fortnight.'

" 'What an interesting way you have of relating a story,' said the carpet-broom; 'it is easy to see that you have been a great deal in women's society.'

" 'That is quite true,' said the water-bucket.

THE FLYING TRUNK

"Then the saucepan went on with his story, and the end was as good as the beginning.

"The plates rattled with pleasure, and the carpet-broom brought some green parsley out of the dust-hole and crowned the saucepan.

" 'Now let us have a dance,' said the fire-tongs; and then how they danced and stuck up one leg in the air. The chair-cushion in the corner burst with laughter when she saw it.

" 'Shall I be crowned now?' asked the fire-tongs; so the broom found another wreath for the tongs.

" 'They are only common people, after all,' thought the matches. The tea-urn was now asked to sing, but she said she had a cold, and could not sing without boiling heat.

"In the window sat an old quill-pen, with which the maid generally wrote. There was nothing remarkable about the pen, excepting that it had been dipped too deeply in the ink, but it was proud of that.

" 'If the tea-urn won't sing,' said the pen, 'she can leave it alone; there is the nightingale in the cage who can sing.'

" 'I think it highly improper,' said the tea-kettle, who was kitchen singer and half-brother to the tea-urn, 'that a rich foreign bird should be listened to here. Is it patriotic? Let the market-basket decide what is right.'

" 'I certainly am vexed,' said the basket. 'Are we spending the evening properly? Would it not be more sensible to put the house in order? If each were in his own place I would lead a game.'

" 'Let us act a play,' said they all. At the same moment the door opened, and the maid came in. Then they all remained quite still; yet, at the same time, there

THE FLYING TRUNK

was not a single pot amongst them who had not a high opinion of himself.

“‘Yes, if we had chosen,’ they each thought, ‘we might have spent a very pleasant evening.’”

“The maid took the matches and lighted them; dear me, how they sputtered and blazed up!

“‘Now, then,’ they thought, ‘every one will see that we are the first. How we shine; what a light we give!’ Even while they spoke their light went out.”

“What a capital story,” said the Queen. “I feel as if I were really in the kitchen and could see the matches; yes, you shall marry our daughter.”

“Certainly,” said the King, “thou shalt have our daughter.” The King said *thou* to him because he was going to be one of the family. The wedding-day was fixed, and on the evening before the whole city was illuminated.

“I will give them a treat,” said the merchant’s son. So he went and bought rockets and crackers, and all sorts of fireworks that could be thought of, packed them in his trunk, and flew up with it into the air. What a whizzing and popping they made as they went off! The Turks, when they saw such a sight in the air, jumped up so high that their slippers flew about their ears.

As soon as the merchant’s son had come down in his flying trunk to the wood after the fireworks, he thought, “I will go back into the town now, and hear what they think of the entertainment.” What strange things people did say; every one whom he questioned had a different tale to tell, though they all thought it very beautiful.

“I saw the Turkish angel myself,” said one; “he had

THE FLYING TRUNK

eyes like glittering stars and a head like foaming water."

"He flew in a mantle of fire," cried another, "and lovely little cherubs peeped out from the folds."

He heard many more fine things about himself, and that the next day he was to be married. After this he went back to the forest to rest himself in his trunk. It had disappeared! A spark from the fireworks which remained had set it on fire; it was burnt to ashes! So the merchant's son could not fly any more, nor go to meet his bride. She stood all day on the roof waiting for him, and most likely she is waiting there still; while he wanders through the world telling fairy tales.

